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MARVEL PREVIEW
$1 No 8
MARVEL PREVIEW
PRESENTS
THE LEGION OF
MONSTERS™
starring
MORBIUS
the
Living
Vampire!
ALL
NEW!
PLUS:
BLADE
THE
VAMPIRE
SLAYER!
TERROR TALES in the MARVEL MANNER!

STAN LEE presents THE LEGION OF MONSTERS

Volume 1/Number 8/Fall 1976

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THE MAN-GOD CONSPIRACY!

A Marvel Apologia

What you hold in your hands, friends, is an excellent collection of graphic fantasy from, what I feel are some of the finest story-tellers in the comics field. People like Mike Ploog, Don McGregor, Val Mayerik, Doug Moench, Gene Colan, Sonny Trinidad and Marv Wolfman.

But you know something, friends — it's not enough!

This editorial is the most difficult piece of writing I've ever had to undertake.

But even that's not enough; not by a long shot.

For over a year now we have been promising you an issue of MARVEL PREVIEW devoted to a character called MAN-GOD (ex-TITAN). For over a year now MAN-GOD has failed to appear. The reasons are many and myriad and I could fill this editorial page with excuses, all quite true and valid. I could. But I won't. I won't because that's not the point. The point is that we have promised something and we have failed to deliver. That hurts because we, whose names appear on the books (one assumes because we take pride in what we are producing ... and we do), value you, the reader, as far more than just another fraction of a sales percentage point. And that's no hype, people, not even a smidgen of it. We knock ourselves out attempting to please and entertain you and to give you the very best quality possible for the all-too-hard earned dollars you spend on these magazines.

And that very item brings us to the *real* point of this editorial. The crime here is not that MAN-GOD, once more, doesn't appear, but that there were no *other* MARVEL PREVIEW projects well enough in the works to appear in its place, thus at least retaining the validity of the purpose of this book. When I stepped into the Editor's chair, due to a number of problems that no one had foreseen and, so, let get out of hand, MAN-GOD was the *only* PREVIEW project in the works. I immediately initiated some new ones — but the damage had been done. We could not initiate a well-thought-out idea for this book fast enough to cover for MAN-GOD — so when MAN-GOD was lost by the ever-efficient U.S. Postal service, we were up that proverbial creek.

You deserve better than that. A lot better. We OWE you better than that!

When I said last issue that I think Marvel should have one good horror book, I had no intention of MARVEL PREVIEW becoming it. And it won't. This is it. MAN-GOD has been retrieved and is well under way, as is our THOR project. Either MAN-GOD or THOR will be here next issue — no surprises, no substitutions. Because, in all honesty, if I can't produce the kind of magazine you deserve, maybe I shouldn't be here.

That may seem just a bit grim for an editorial, but it is how I feel, and I think right now you need the kind of commitment you can believe in. MARVEL PREVIEW still needs your continued support. I still feel that it is possibly the most valuable Black-and-White we produce — a vehicle for fresh ideas and new directions. And that, and that *only*, is what it should be used for and what it *will* be used for from now on.

On a somewhat lighter note, I am not at all displeased at this issue's contents, much as this wasn't really the best place to present them. It is a good, consistent horror package produced, as I said, by some of the top talents in the industry. I think you're getting a good load of entertainment for your dollar. And, who knows — if SATANA and now this does well enough, we just might be bringing out a new horror title. If we do, I can almost promise you it will star Satana.

Until then, take care and watch out for each other. And remember, next issue — MAN-GOD or THOR! One or the other. Really!

Join us ... please!

— JOHN WARNER, EDITOR

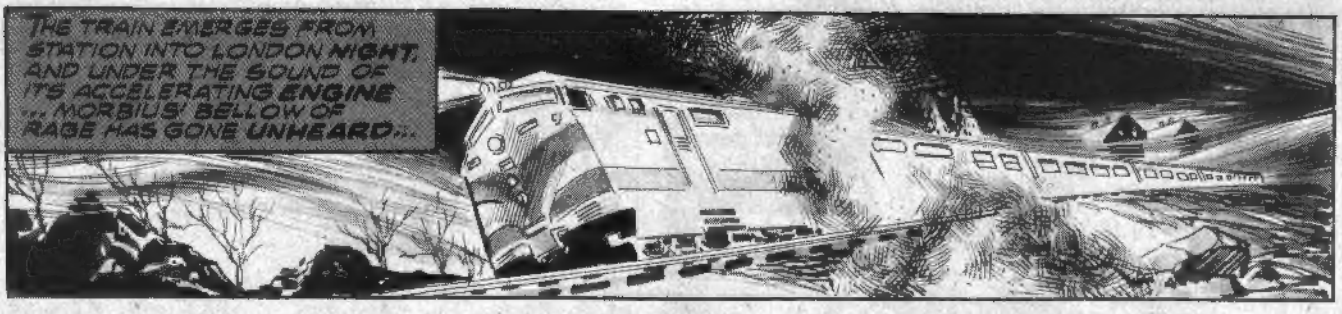
VICTORIA RAILWAY STATION, LONDON...
... ONE-WAY TO GLASGOW...
AND YOUR NAME, SIR....?
NIKOS MICHAELS!
NIKOS... MICHAELS...
YES... THERE WE ARE...
THAT'LL BE TRACK FOURTEEN, SIR, LEAVIN' IN LESS THAN SIX MINUTES!
HAVE A PLEASANT JOURNEY NOW!
WELL, HE WAS CERTAINLY AN ODD TYPE, JOHNNY...
WHY'S THAT?
ACH--DIDN'T YA SEE THE WAY HIS COLLAR WAS TURNED UP, AND HIS BRIM PULLED DOWN--ALL MYSTERIOUS-LIKE?
Y'BEEN READIN' TOO MUCH, PARKINS!
LIKELY AS NOT, THE POOR BLOKE'S SIMPLY TOO UGLY TO SHOW HIS FACE!

Story: Doug Moench Art: Sonny Trinidad

COMPARTMENT 12-C, LEFT COACH, SIR!
THE COACH IS EMPTY... AND THUS A MAN IDENTIFIED ONLY AS NIKOS MICHAELS HURRIES TOWARD HIS COMPARTMENT...
INDEED, THE TWO FACTORS SEEM INEXTRICABLY LINKED--AS THOUGH THE MAN'S ABRUPT HASTE FEEDS ON HIS NEW ISOLATION AND FREEDOM FROM PRYING EYES...
...AS THOUGH IT HAS REQUIRED EVERY LAST SHRED OF HIS FADING STRENGTH TO CONTROL HIMSELF-- TO RESTRAIN HIMSELF FROM SCREAMING TO THE WORLD THAT HE IS NOT NIKOS MICHAELS... THAT HE IS NO LONGER EVEN A MAN... THAT HE IS NOW--
THE PAIN-- BURNING IN ME...!
LIKE A FEVER-- DRIVING ME MAD--!!
THE MADMAN OF MANSION SLADE

MUST HAVE IT-- BEFORE THE FEVER DRIVES ME BERSERK--!
MUST DROWN THE PAIN...
LAST CALL FOR GLASGOW--!
ALL ABOARD, PLEASE--!
...AND HIS MOUTH-- HIS DEATH-WHITE LIPS-- SUCK AT THE BOTTLE OF PLASMA WITH THE OBSCENE SOUND OF LUST.
...WITH BLOOD...
...SWEET... THICK... BLOOD...
THEN, AS THE TRAIN LURCHES TO LIFE...
...MORBIUS DRINKS...
HIS HIDEOUS EYES GLARE WITH WILD GREED...
BUT SOON THE GURGLING SNARLS GROW SOFTER...
...AND WHEN IT IS OVER...
NO--!!
KREEESH

WE DID'NA WANT TO STAY OUT ON THE MOORS THIS LONG, DID WE, BOY...?
RRRR
NOW WHAT THE DEVIL ARE YE GROWLIN' ABOOT? THERE CANNA BE--
RRRRR
ANGUS--! COME BACK HERE, YE GREAT STUPID BEAST--!
I'M TELLIN' YE THERE'S NOTHIN'--
AIIEEEEE
ANGUS... MY GOD, ANGUS... WHAT COULD 'AVE DONE THIS TO--
ANGUS--!
ANGUS-- WHAT IS IT, BOY--?!!
NO--OH MY GOD-- NOOOO!!


THE TRAIN EMERGES FROM STATION INTO LONDON NIGHT, AND UNDER THE SOUND OF ITS ACCELERATING ENGINE ... MORBIUS' BELLOW OF RAGE HAS GONE UNHEARD...

UNMOVED BY SOFT ANGUISH OR DEEP DARKNESS, THE TRAIN RATTLES ONWARD... NOW LEAVING LONDON BEHIND AS IT RELENTLESSLY STRAINS CLOSER TO ITS FINAL DESTINATION...

A THICK, RESTLESS FOG COVERS FENWICK MOOR THIS NIGHT. IT SEEMS TO TRAP THE MOONLIGHT WITHIN ITS INTANGIBLE GRASP TRANSFORMING IT TO A LAMBENT GLOW OF SWIRLING MYSTERY.

WHAT WAS--
GOOD... LORD... IN... HEAVEN...
UHRRRR
RRRR
NOOOOOO!!
ROWWRRR
YAAAAHHHH!!
UHRRR
BOTH INNOCENTS LIE DEAD...
UHRRR
...VICTIMS OF THE FOG, OF THE MOOR, AND OF SOMETHING ELSE...

DAWN: THOUGH AN HOUR SHORT OF GLASGOW THE TRAIN NOW APPROACHES THE SMALL SCOTTISH TOWN OF CUPAR FIFE...

THE POPULATION OF CUPAR IS 2658...FAR TOO NEGLIGIBLE TO WARRANT EITHER TRAIN STATIONS OR SCHEDULED STOPS...

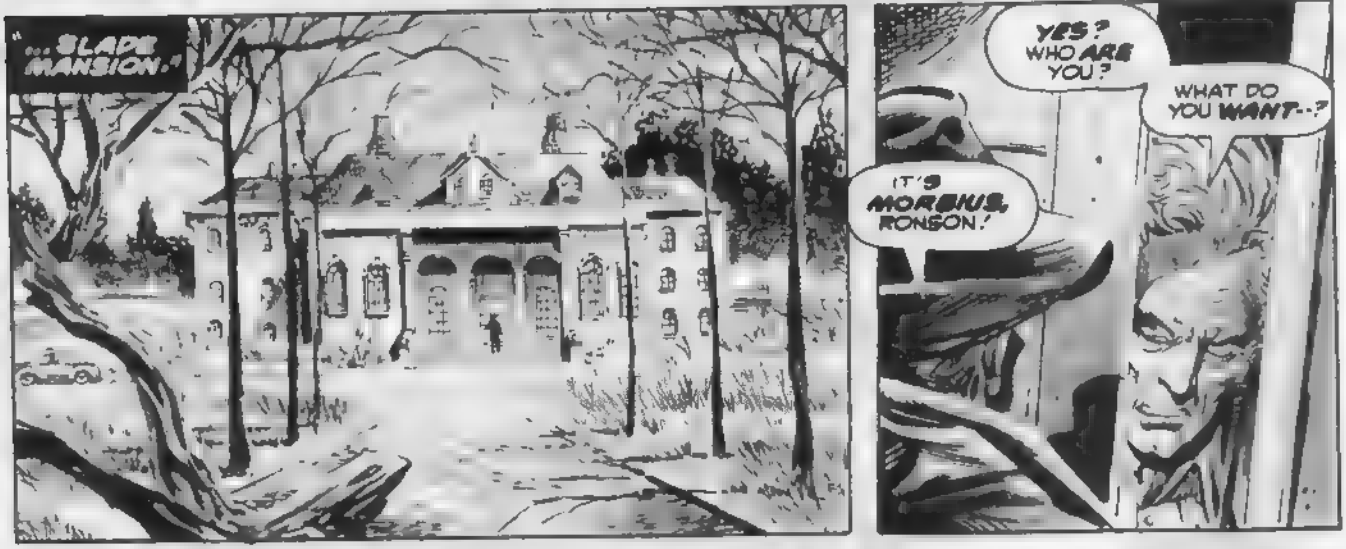
HOWEVER, THERE IS ONE PASSENGER ABOARD THIS PARTICULAR TRAIN...

...WHO HAS BUSINESS IN CUPAR FIFE.
FROM A DEEP CROUCH, MORBIUS SURGES FROM THE ROOF OF THE TRAIN, SNAPPING HIS ARTIFICIAL WINGS TAUT TO SCOOP THE MORNING WIND...

WHERE YE BE GOIN', MATE?
DO YOU KNOW WHERE SLADE MANSION IS LOCATED?
BE A POOR CABBIE IF I DID'NA--AND BLIND TO BOOT! IN A TOWN LIKE CUPAR, A SINGLE MANSION IS JUST A WEE BIT HARD TO MISS!
CLIMB ABOARD, MATE!
Y'KNOW, IT'S FUNNY YOU'D BE WANTIN' TO GO UP TO THE SLADE HOUSE THIS MORNIN'...
FOLKS IN THE RESTAURANT WERE JUST TALKIN' ABOOT THE SLADES! Y'SEE, SANDY AITCHISON AN' HIS OLD HOUND HAVE'NA COME BACK FROM HUNTIN' ALL NIGHT...
HOW DOES THAT CONCERN THE SLADES?
WELL, THE DAMN FOOL WAS HUNTIN' OUT ON FENWICK MOOR--BETWEEN TOWN AND THE SLADE HOUSE! FOLKS ARE FIGURIN' THAT SANDY AND HIS HOUND WERE MURDERED!
MURDERED...?
AYE! FIVE OR SIX YEARS AGO, THERE WAS QUITE A FEW MURDERS IN CUPAR--UNTIL FOLKS LEARNED NOT TO GO OUT ON THE MOORS AFTER DARK! SINCE THEN, IT'S MOSTLY BEEN SHEEP SLAUGHTERED--THROATS TORN OUT AND THE LIKE...
ANYWAY, SINCE THE WHOLE THING STARTED 'ROUND ABOOT THE TIME OLD ABIGAIL SLADE DIED... SOME FOLKS BELIEVE IT'S JEREMIAH WHO'S THE MANIAC--BROKE UP OVER LOSIN' HIS MOTHER, Y'SEE...
BY THE BY, WOULD IT BE JEREMIAH SLADE YE'RE GOIN' TO SEE NOW...?
MY BUSINESS IS WITH ROWSON SLADE!
OH, IT'S THE LAD'S FATHER, THEN! MUST'VE BEEN DIFFICULT FOR HIM, TOO... SHE WAS HIS WIFE, Y'KNOW! ABIGAIL, I MEAN...

FOR A MOMENT, THE LIVING VAMPIRE IS CAUGHT IN THE HURTLING TRAIN'S VORTEX...
...JERKED BACK LIKE A BIZARRE KITE WITHOUT STRING...
...BUT ONCE FREE OF THE TRAIN'S AFTERMATH, HE STRAIGHTENS HIS HOLLOW-BONED FORM...
...AND GUIDES IT LIKE AN ARROW...
...STRAIGHT TO THE GROUND!
SUNLIGHT ...BURNING ME...
IT WOULD SEEM THAT DURING THE DAY...
MY DISGUISE SERVES MORE THAN ONE PURPOSE!
A FIFTEEN-MINUTE WALK AWAITS MICHAEL MORBIUS ...A WALK THROUGH MILD PAIN DESPITE HIS SUN-SHIELDING HAT...
...BUT A WALK NECESSARY TO ATTAIN HIS GOAL...
CUPAR FIFE, SCOTLAND; EARLY MORNING...
CAB--!

BUT THEN AGAIN, THERE'RE OTHER FOLKS WHO DON'T BELIEVE IT'S THE BLADES AT ALL... CLAIM THE MOOR'S HAUNTED...
... BY SOME GREAT MONSTER WITH BLAZIN' RED EYES AND THE LIKE...
AND WHICH DO YOU BELIEVE?
I BELIEVE IN STAYIN' OFF THE MOORS UNLESS THE SUN'S WITH ME!
YE'D DO WELL TO ADOPT THE SAME RELIGION YERSELF!
BUT HERE'S YER STOP, MATE...


...BLADE MANSION.
YES? WHO ARE YOU?
WHAT DO YOU WANT--?
IT'S MORBIUS, RONSON.

I WANT TO KNOW WHY YOU'VE NEVER ANSWERED MY LETTERS!
MICHAEL--! GOOD LORD, MAN --YOUR FACE--!
--WAS FULLY DESCRIBED IN MY LETTERS, RONSON ...TO PREPARE YOU FOR THIS VISIT, WHOSE INVITATION WAS NEVER EXTENDED!
YOU MENTIONED A PALLOR, BUT... I NEVER IMAGINED--!
BUT PLEASE, MICHAEL--I'M TRULLY SORRY I NEVER REPLIED TO YOUR REQUESTS! I'VE BEEN... EXTREMELY BUSY --NOT WITH MY WORK, BUT...

WELL, IT'S MY SON JEREMIAH, MICHAEL! - HE'S...NOT WELL...
EXCUSE ME, RONSON --BUT COULD WE CONTINUE INSIDE? THE AFFLICTION RESPONSIBLE FOR MY SKIN'S PALLOR... HAS ALSO RENDERED IT EXTREMELY SENSITIVE TO SUNLIGHT...
OF COURSE, MICHAEL--FORGIVE ME!
WE CAN TALK IN MY STUDY! IT'S DOWN THE CORRIDOR TO YOUR LEFT--I'LL JOIN YOU THERE IN A MOMENT...
SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING, MICHAEL...
I HAD TO ATTEND A MINOR TASK ...BUT EVEN THOSE SEEM TO REQUIRE GREATER TIME THESE DAYS! AGE, I'M AFRAID, IS NOT DESIGNED FOR QUICKNESS...
BUT WHERE WERE WE?
YOU MENTIONED YOUR SON WAS ILL...
YES! WELL...
JEREMIAH IS NOT ILL, MICHAEL! HE'S ACTUALLY MAD! HOPELESSLY--VIOLENTLY--INSANE! IN FACT, HE MUST BE CONFINED TO A SINGLE ROOM...
WHY NOT A SANITARIUM?
NO...
WERE WE TO COMMIT HIM TO AN ASYLUM, HE WOULD SPEND THE REST OF HIS LIFE IN A PADDED CELL! YOU'VE NO IDEA HOW HE RAVES, MICHAEL --THE DELUSIONS HE HAS... THE WILD STORIES HE TELLS...
BUT LET'S NOT DWELL UPON IT! IF JEREMIAH CANNOT BE HELPED, THEN PERHAPS YOU CAN.
NOW THAT YOU'RE HERE --AND DESPITE WHAT MUST HAVE APPEARED AS A MOST CALLOUS DISREGARD FOR AN OLD FRIEND ON MY PART...

...I WILL OF COURSE AID YOU IN YOUR ATTEMPT TO FIND A CURE FOR THIS BLOOD DISEASE OF--
SOME TEA...?
GET HER OUT, RONSON--!
IT'S QUITE ALL RIGHT, MICHAEL! I'VE ALREADY INFORMED MARY OF YOUR... AFFLICTION!
YOU...TOLD HER--?
ONLY ABOUT YOUR APPEARANCE, MICHAEL!
I'M AFRAID MY DAUGHTER IS NOT AS INTERESTED IN DETAILS AS WE SCIENTISTS ARE! BUT THERE'S NO NEED TO BE SELF-CONSCIOUS IN HER PRESENCE!
I SEE! THEN... WHEN MAY WE BEGIN WORK RONSON...?
NOT RIGHT NOW, I'M AFRAID! I WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF SOME EXPERIMENTS WHEN YOU ARRIVED, MICHAEL! THEY'LL SPOIL IF LEFT TOO LONG...
IN FACT, I REGRET I WON'T EVEN HAVE TIME FOR YOUR TEA, MARY!
BEFORE YOU GO, RONSON... THE CAB DRIVER MENTIONED SOMETHING ABOUT A MONSTER--OR A MANIAC--COMMITTING MURDERS OUT ON THE MOOR...
OH...UH, YES... THERE WERE SOME MURDERS SEVERAL YEARS BACK! BUT IT'S NOT MY SON WHO COMMITTED THEM, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE WONDERING...
PROBABLY A WOLF--OR A RABID HOUND... AND LONG SINCE DEAD BY NOW!
IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, THEN, I MUST GET BACK TO MY LAB!
MARY WILL SHOW YOU TO THE GUEST ROOM!
THANK YOU!
YOU'RE QUITE WELCOME, MR. MORBIUS! AND WHILE I DON'T LIKE TO APOLOGIZE FOR MY FATHER, I'M SURE YOU REALIZE HE'S GOTTEN OLDER SINCE YOU WERE COLLEAGUES... AND HE HAS CHANGED SINCE MOTHER DIED!

I UNDERSTAND, MARY!
THEN THERE'S ONLY ONE LAST THING, MR. MORBIUS! FATHER PROBABLY EXPLAINED TO YOU ABOUT MY BROTHER! SHOULD YOU HEAR HIM SHOUTING... OR EVEN SCREAMING...
...IT REALLY IS BEST TO IGNORE IT!
MORBIUS FINDS NO POSSIBLE REPLY TO THE GIRL'S SOMBER WORDS...
...AND SO HE SITS IN SILENCE, ALONE FOR LONG MINUTES FILLED WITH THOUGHTS OF A CURE--AN END TO HIS GHASTLY VAMPIRIC EXISTENCE...
...BUT LONG MINUTES BEREFT, AS USUAL, OF HOPE.
AND THEN...
DEMENTIA--A VOICE OF WAILING DEMENTIA...
...AND YET A VOICE OF ALL TOO FAMILIAR AGONY AND TORMENT.
...A VOICE WHICH INVOKES DESPERATE PITY...AND FROM A LIVING VAMPIRE, A FORM OF FERVENT EMPATHY...
...A VOICE, IN SHORT, WHICH RENDERS MORBIUS DEAF TO ALL PREVIOUS CAUTIONS AND RATIONALIZATIONS...
OH MY GOD... YOU ARE KEPT LIKE AN ANIMAL...
WHO ARE YOU--? THE LIGHT WON'T LET ME SEE YOU--!
BUT YOUR'S IS NOT MY FATHER'S VOICE--!

LISTEN TO ME, VOICE--YOU MUST LISTEN TO ME--!
YOU MUST FREE ME--SO I CAN TELL THE POLICE--!! IT'S NOT ME WHO KILLED THEM! FATHER WANTS EVERYONE TO BELIEVE THAT--!
FATHER'S THE MONSTER OF THE MOORS--HE'S THE ONE!! WHEN MOTHER DIED, HE GOT AFRAID OF DEATH --TRIED TO STOP DEATH --BUT HE TURNED INTO A MONSTER INSTEAD!!
I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS IT!! DON'T YOU SEE, VOICE--?!? HE CAN'T FREE ME--HE'S LIKE JEKYLL AND HYDE--FATHER AND MONSTER --AND I'LL TELL!!
YOU MUST FREE ME TO STOP HIM!- SO I CAN PROVE I'M NOT THE MONSTER OF THE MOORS--!! YOU MUST, YOU MUST, YOU MUST, YOU MUST!!
FREE ME
THE MAN IS MAD...
FREE ME
...PERHAPS MAD ENOUGH TO KILL...
...MAD ENOUGH TO BE SHACKLED LIKE A BEAST...
LET ME OUT
...MAD ENOUGH TO REQUIRE THE PROTECTION...
...OF A DESPERATE, DISTRAUGHT FATHER WHO CANNOT BEAR THE THOUGHT OF BEING PUNISHED FOR THE LOSS OF HIS WIFE... WITH THE LOSS OF HIS SON AS WELL.
DRUGS, RONSON--?
WHO--?!
MICHAEL--! YOU ...YOU STARTLED ME, MICHAEL...!
I ASKED YOU A QUESTION! WERE YOU INJECTING YOURSELF WITH A DRUG, RONSON?

UH... YES, MORBIUS... IT WAS A DRUG! BUT NOT THE KIND YOU THINK...
YOU SEE, MY HEART IS THE ONLY ADDICT AROUND HERE! IT, UH, REFUSES TO FUNCTION WITHOUT PERIODIC MEDICINAL PROMPTING!
OF COURSE! FORGIVE ME, RONSON!
I CAME DOWN TO ASK WHEN YOU'D BE FINISHED WITH YOUR EXPERIMENTS...
NOT FOR ANOTHER SEVERAL HOURS, MICHAEL!
THEN TONIGHT MAY WE--
SLEEP, I'M AFRAID, IS YET ANOTHER MEDICINE REQUIRED BY MY HEART... A GOOD FOURTEEN HOURS OF IT EVERY NIGHT
BUT I PROMISE YOU--IN THE MORNING, WE'LL TAKE A SAMPLE OF YOUR BLOOD AND BEGIN SEARCHING FOR THE CURE!
VERY WELL! IN THE MORNING, THEN...
NIGHT: AND SLADE MANSION IS SWALLOWED BY LANGUID FOG...
...KNOWING HIS RESOLVE WILL BREAK UNDER THE SLIGHTEST TEMPTATION...
...AS MORBIUS TOO FEELS HIMSELF CONSUMED.
THE THIRST ARRIVED WITH DARKNESS... THE PAIN SOMEWHAT LATER, WHEN THIRST WAS ALLOWED TO PERSIST. BOTH HAVE NOW PEAKED, AND CONSPIRED TOWARD INSENSATE LUST. BUT STILL, HE REFUSES TO ENTER THE NIGHT...
MR. MORBIUS...?

I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT LIKE SOMETHING TO EAT BEFORE--
GET... OUT ...OF...HERE...
I...I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY--
GET-- OUT-- OF-- HERE!
BUT IF THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG ...MAYBE I CAN--
YOU FOOL--!!
GET OUT OF HERE!!
SHE IS HELPLESS ...WARM AND ALIVE... PULSING WITH THICK, HOT BLOOD... FRESH BLOOD...
N-NO... PLEASE ...DON'T... PLEASE...
MORBIUS BREAKS... AND THE VAMPIRE LIVES.
NOOOO
EEEEEE
EEEEE
EVEN AS HIS FANGS PUNCTURE THE RESILIENT FLESH OF THE GIRL'S THROAT, MORBIUS FIGHTS THE OBSESSION...

...FIGHTS IT EVEN AS HE SUCKS AT THE SPURTING STREAMS OF BLOOD...
...FIGHTS IT...
...FIGHTS IT...
...AND WINS!
NO--!!
DAMN IT, NOOO!!
NOOOO
RIP
YOU... YOU'RE THE MURDERER ...THE ONE WHO ROAMS THE MOOR...
I'VE GOT TO TELL THEM--!
TELL THE POLICE--!
YOU KILLED ALL THOSE PEOPLE... RIPPED THE THROATS FROM DOGS AND SHEEP...
LEAVE... LEAVE WHILE YOU CAN... YOU LITTLE FOOL...
TREATMENT FOR SHOCK, A CONDITION MORBIUS HAS FREQUENTLY WITNESSED... BUT SHE WILL LIVE, AT LEAST...

YES, SHE WILL LIVE.
THAT, AND THE SMALL AMOUNT OF INGESTED BLOOD, GIVES HIM STRENGTH HE GATHERED FOR LONG, HEAVY MOMENTS
HELP-- SOMEBODY HELP ME-- THE MURDERER--!!
BUT WILL SHE LIVE?-- NOW?... OUT ON THE MOOR? -- FACING A MONSTER... A MANIAC... WOLF OR RABID HOUND
IT IS A QUESTION THE LIVING VAMPIRE DOES NOT WANT ANSWERED... KNOWING THAT IT WAS HIS ATTACK WHICH HAS NOW POSED IT...
HELLLLPP!!

RRRRRRR
WAK!
K!?

RONSON--!
YES, MICHAEL... YOU SEE, THE INJECTIONS ...THEY FAILED TO SUPPRESS THE BEAST...
...AFTER DARK...
LORD, RONSON, I --I'VE TAKEN SO MUCH OF YOUR BLOOD--! YOU'RE DYING--I'VE MURDERED YOU--!
NO, MICHAEL... YOU HAVE NOT MURDERED A MAN... YOU'VE MERELY DESTROYED A MONSTER...
...FOR, THE FIRST TIME... I TRIED TO ...CONQUER DEATH BY RESTORING... MY YOUTH...
...I LOST... WHATEVER HUMANITY...
...I ONCE... POSSESSSSSS...
THEN, ONCE AGAIN... THE CURE IS GONE... IF EVER IT EXISTED...
...GONE WITH THE BLOOD OF A FORMER FRIEND NOW FILLING HIS BLOATED STOMACH!
COULD HE BUT AFFORD IT... HE WOULD BECOME SICK.
VIOLENTLY SICK.
GO HOME, GIRL!
GO HOME AND FREE YOUR BROTHER FROM MADNESS!

THE THRASHED FOG RETURNS TO TRANQUILITY..
... BUT THE FEVER IN MORBIUS CONTINUES TO RAGE. THE THIRST, NEVER FULLY QUELLED, RISES AGAIN LIKE HOT BILE TO THE BACK OF HIS THROAT.
HE DRINKS, LONG AND DEEP. THIS TIME, IT IS NOT A HELPLESS GIRL UNDER HIS HELL-SHARP FANGS...
THIS TIME
...HE DOES NOT FIGHT.
...AND DOES NOT [illegible] UNTIL GORGED.
THE MADNESS BEGINS TO FADE FROM HIS EYES AS HE LOOKS DOWN UPON THIS FELLED AND DRAINED MONSTER OF THE MOORS..
...AND SEES...
FATHER....?

UNLEASHED---AGAIN

By Ralph Macchio

two of the prime selling points of any vampire worth his fangs. Obviously, with the Code keeping its eye on things there would have to be a conspicuous absence of gore and shredded throats. How could a character whose very name was synonymous with blood, survive and prosper in a bloodless medium? The answer lay in the focusing of the reader's attention on mood, on a tangible texture of evil which made its ominous presence felt in a more than visual way. And it worked. Under the capable scripting of Gerry Conway, Gardner Fox, Archie Goodwin, and of course, Marv Wolfman, combined with the extraordinary pencilling and inking of Gene Colan and Tom Palmer, T.O.D. had assured itself a place in the forefront of the Monster March. The Craze was about to begin.

With the success of TOMB OF DRACULA fresh in their minds, Stan Lee and Roy Thomas returned to their original plans for the revitalized Count in early 1973 with the first of their new black-and-white horror line: DRACULA LIVES! And an auspicious debut it was. For whatever the reason, the accent in this new non-Code regulated title was on storytelling and characterization, not gratuitous blood-spattering. Dracula became an awesome figure of Undead power, about whom an entire mythology of supporting characters and adversaries moved under his menacing shadow.

DRACULA LIVES went through numerous changes in its thirteen issue existence as the new Marvel black-and-white department passed from its nascent stages into youthful exuberance. In addition to graphic stories circulating around the Prince of Vampires, there were articles covering every conceivable aspect of Dracula, from his numerous screen appearances to the historical authenticity of a man named Vlad Tepes. And along with the articles went several prose fiction pieces chronicling yet more events in the 500 year "life" of Dracula. One particularly welcome editorial decision was the removal of the 1950's horror reprints after issue #4, reprints which at the outset were apparently necessary to keep the cost of such an expensive publication down. With the phasing out of the 50's tales, room was opened which allowed for at least three complete Dracula stories per issue, covering all the various time periods during which the Transylvanian Terror was abroad. Continuity, ever the Marvel hallmark, was scrupulously maintained by Marv Wolfman, who was careful to oversee each story and make certain the Dracula legend Marvel was building would be a consistent one. And it didn't stop with Dracula, for his own estranged daughter, Lilith, received her short-lived series in issue #10. Perhaps the most ambitious project attempted was the brilliant, though sorrowfully uncompleted adaptation by Roy Thomas and Dick Giordano of the book which started it all: Bram Stoker's DRACULA.

When DRACULA LIVES reached its thirteenth issue, it had become one very classy magazine. With the DRACULA adaptation and Lilith stories alternating with full-length Dracula tales, this title had a flexible, satisfying format, which elicited largely favorable mail and an adequate sales record.

And then it was cancelled.

We'll return to that last statement a bit later, but now let's roll backward a few paragraphs to the point at which Dracula made his premiere appearance

MONSTERS

From whence sprang the origins of the Marvel Monster Craze?

It's a puzzling question indeed, one which seems to have no pat answer though everyone has offered a multitude of maybes. When kung fu became all the rage across America, the source was easily traced to the movies of the late Bruce Lee and the now-defunct television series which starred David Carradine. Thus when Marvel came out with its own MASTER OF KUNG FU, IRON FIST, and black-and-white DEADLY HANDS OF KUNG FU, we were tapping an already existing phenomenon for audience potential. In 1970, when then-publisher Martin Goodman had decided to enter the horror magazine arena with a title featuring *Count Dracula*, chances for its success looked reasonable because Warren Publications had been doing quite well with a small group of horror magazines of their own for several years. And despite the failures of two previous black-and-white attempts by Marvel to gain a foothold in this market, (an oversized Spider-Man book and a raw adventure book, SAVAGE TALES—neither of which was horror oriented) perhaps it was the subject matter which just wasn't selling and not the basic format. Unfortunately, for obscure reasons, Dracula first appeared in his own color comic and only later was awarded a black-and-white, when the color strip proved successful. For you hardnosed factfinders, the first issue of the color TOMB OF DRACULA had an April 1971 cover date and a quarterly publication schedule. With the second issue, the book went bi-monthly and by the eighth issue it became a monthly title where it has remained in terms of frequency up through the present.

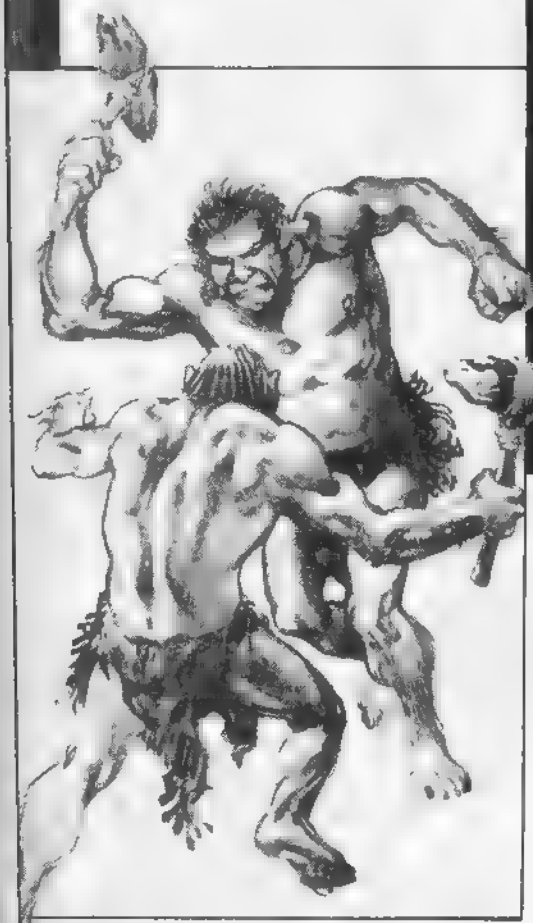
But here's the rub.

As stated, Marvel had originally intended Dracula to begin his career at the House of Ideas by stalking the cobwebbed pages of a black-and-white magazine *minus* the Comics Code restrictions on violence and bloodletting;

in his own black-and-white. Apparently the enthusiasm of the undertaking was infectuous, precipitating Marvel's taking a giant leap forward in this new market by unveiling no less than three more full-size magazines all revolving around variations of the horror theme. Within months of one another, MONSTERS UNLEASHED and TALES OF THE ZOMBIE, had staked out places for themselves on the newsstands to satiate the allegedly horror-hungry buying public. And with the legions of the Undead making fast inroads into Marvel's color books, why not try a magazine which wouldn't feature Dracula, but would deal with the entire universe of vampires and devote a title to that? Two points if you can remember the name. That's right—VAMPIRE TALES.

The question most likely raised in the mind of vampiric novices is what in blazes could anyone (even Marvel) do with such a limited framework. The answer was: plenty. It seems vampires and their ilk appear in the legends of all the peoples of the world, from South American tribes to Indian farmers. With such a universal background the avenues open for exploration seemed limitless; vampire stories could be laid anywhere, during any time period.

First issues of any magazines are the most difficult to give a truly objective assessment to; so many things have to gel in all areas that it's much too easy to



come down and be cynical with a biting commentary. There was considerable room for improvement in all facets of the book and it wasn't long in coming. The forefront of the book beginning with the second issue became, *Morbius the Living Vampire* (who had first appeared in SPIDER-MAN #101) the strip took on a forward direction with the coming of Don McGregor and Tom Sutton and later Doug Moench and Sonny Trinidad. And while Morbius became the lead in VAMPIRE TALES, his own color comic, ADVENTURES INTO FEAR was moving in a totally different direction. In the color strip, writer Steve Gerber had decided to take the character and place him in a science fiction setting on a different world. Morbius had made the difficult transition from adversary of a major Marvel hero into star of two separate series. Vampires were unquestionably having an easy time of it, despite the best efforts of stake wielding critics who never believed these night-stalkers had any long lasting potential.

VAMPIRE TALES also served as the showcase for both *Satana the Devil's Daughter* and *Lilith the daughter of Dracula*, though each was presented in

only one adventure here before going on to other magazines. With the success of Warren's *Vampirella*, Marvel felt it had nothing to lose by trying out several female horror characters of its own. Regrettably neither strip ever amounted to much during the brief period they existed, though the fault was more circumstantial than creative.

Eventually, text features were eliminated from VAMPIRE TALES in favor of longer, more involved Morbius stories, but this was to be temporary, for with the eleventh issue VAMPIRE TALES was cancelled.

The realm of the Undead has many permutations and variations on itself which allow for ample latitude in the selection of a theme around which a horror magazine can be published. One topic which had been given some exposure before but had never really had a magazine devoted to it was *voo doo*. And what better to make the main feature in such a book than the adventures of one of the most horrifying specters from beyond the grave: a zuvembi. And so TALES OF THE ZOMBIE was born and became one of the four flagship productions of the newly opened Marvel Monster Shop. Although he was a "new" character in the Monster Universe, the origins of Marvel's zombie date back to a graphic story by *Sub-Mariner* creator Bill Everett. When Stan Lee had decided he wanted to do a magazine entitled TALE OF THE ZOMBIE it was left in the capable editorial hands of one Roy Thomas to decide just who that zombie was going to be. When Roy uncovered the late 50's tale featuring the zombie by Bill Everett, he knew Marvel had its newest fear feature set. ZOMBIE had a short run of ten issues, but it, as did all the other fledgling Marvel magazines, become ever more and more worth its cover price. The scripting was by Steve Gerber, whose own MAN-THING color series, another Monster Craze offshoot, became a classic in its own time. Suffice to say Steve did more with Marvel's zombie than had ever been done with a character of its kind before, in any medium.

Marvel's zombie was on, of all things, a spiritual odyssey to reclaim his lost humanity—a humanity he'd lost long before becoming a zombie. Simon Garth (star of our show) was a wealthy plantation owner in New Orleans who had allowed money and its pursuit to usurp his deepest feelings, his soul in effect. When he was murdered and returned to "life" as a zombie, he was set apart from other walking dead figures in that he retained a horrifying awareness of his condition. He evolved as a true human being internally, while his skin was encrusted with decay. Eventually, after seeing much of himself through the actions of others, Simon Garth returned to the peace of the grave, a whole man. With a little imagination, even the most prosaic of concepts can become interesting storytelling devices

There were other zombies who made their stiff-legged way through TALES OF THE ZOMBIE in various anthology stories and much of the realm of voo doo was explored through a goodly number of text pieces, many of them quite comprehensive. It was a fine package but the kind of magazine one isn't sorry to see cancelled as the ZOMBIE was after issue #10, because we had followed its leading character from ignorance and adversity to self-knowledge and finally peace. May Simon Garth's eternal rest never be disturbed.

The fourth of Marvel's initial black-and-white horror books (and the second to be released) was a book which went under the unwieldy title of MONSTERS UNLEASHED. The editorial thrust behind this project was to spotlight "monsters in each and every incarnation.", though it's the opinion of some that the very amorphous nature of the concept worked against the magazine and kept it from being among the most successful of black-and-whites. An added handicap was the lack of an impressive lead feature. The first issue was all anthology tales, but beginning with the second, Marvel's version of the *Frankenstein Monster*, who, at the time, had his own color comic, was updated to 1973/74. But it lacked purpose and direction from the start, a problem which switching artist and writer in mid-story did little, if anything, to alleviate. The rest of the magazine was left open and along the way a few nice things were done. Yet, overall, there was much to be desired even after MONSTERS UNLEASHED was several issues old.

There were several attempts at beginning other series which never ran more than a few installments, such as the ill-fated *Gulliver Jones - Warrior of Mars* strip. There were a number of prose pieces featuring the *Man-Thing* character (written by Steve Gerber) and one of Marvel's color-book successes, *Werewolf by Night* (by Gerry Conway). It's interesting to note that in a highly touted visual medium, the prose stories brought forth some of the most favorable mail. Of course, there were also the obligatory articles for awhile, which fan less to factual pieces on monsters and more in the area of reviewing early Universal horror films.

Eventually the reprints had been eliminated, as they had in the other Marvel Monster books and things had gotten a bit more organized. Still, when MONSTERS UNLEASHED died with

its eleventh issue, it was perhaps further than any other Marvel black-and-white from having finally found its direction.

Two other horror titles are worth mentioning for they kind of round out this little foray into retrospective criticism. Neither of these books was a groundbreaker as the previous four were, still they were part and parcel of the Marvel Monster Movement, so let's see where they were at.

THE HAUNT OF HORROR was to have been the black-and-white which dealt with the subtler kinds of terrors, those which infest the mind—or possess the body. With the second issue, a new character was introduced, one who had not had his baptism of fire in a color comic as had Morbius, Dracula, or the Frankenstein Monster. His name was *Gabriel the Devil Hunter*. The Exorcist had taken hold of the American public and so there was certainly room for a character of that persuasion in a horror magazine. Despite the occasional crudeness of the art, this was at times a rather powerful strip, which if read under the proper conditions could evoke deep emotions. Gabriel left the HAUNT OF HORROR book with its last issue, though he was to appear once again in the final issue of MONSTERS UNLEASHED. *Satana the Devil's Daughter*, for whom Marvel had been searching for a home, became the secondary feature in the book, appearing in several stories and an exceptional prose piece by new Satana scripter, Chris Claremont. Unfortunately, her appearances were intermittent and in her brief black-and-white life she had gone through no less than three writers. Most recently the Devil's Daughter appeared last issue in this very book, MARVEL PREVIEW and if all goes well, there may be more in the offing. HAUNT OF HORROR in addition to its two series stars, ran a long article on Marvel writers' reactions to The Exorcist which went over two issues. And then with the fifth issue, HAUNT OF HORROR was cancelled in an apparently last minute decision, for the back cover of that last issue had a next issue ad.

One final magazine which was part of the Great Craze was Marvel's MONSTERS OF THE MOVIES which was an all-article magazine handled largely on the West Coast by people outside of the Marvel mainstream. The first six issues were devoted to the screen appearances of most of the well known denizens of the night, such as the werewolf, vampire, and mummy. There were interviews with several film personalities and looks behind the screen at make-up and costuming. Still, the old Marvel magic was missing. And so with the seventh issue, editorial chores were evenly divided between the West and East Coast—where Marvel's main headquarters is. Issue seven featured a comprehensive filmbook on Hammer Films' classic Horror of Dracula and it seemed as if good things were in store. But apparently early issues were not sales blockbusters and thus with its ninth issue, billed as the "super annual issue" and its cover price boosted from one dollar up another quarter, MONSTERS OF THE MOVIES passed into oblivion.

We've just about covered Marvel's attempts to make a solid stand in the horror market. Oh there were a couple of footnotes that could be added, such as two issues of a magazine entitled MASTERS OF TERROR, and one issue of LEGION OF MONSTERS which attempted once again to test sales most recently in 1975. But for the most part, in the black-and-white medium, there isn't much happening in the way of loathsome demons from the pit or things that go bump in the night.

And it's a shame.

No one really knows what suddenly began to turn people who read comics on to monsters. And no one knows why, suddenly, an entire line of magazines, many of which were emerging as solid items of visual and verbal quality, were decimated at a single stroke. If the books had all been bad, their deaths would have been welcomed. But they weren't. In the short year or two they existed a sincere attempt was made to show that stories about monsters, even the most visually repugnant ones, don't of necessity have to be grade Z losers, but can achieve the same sensitivity and expertise of craftsmanship as any other literary or graphic endeavor.

As a final assessment one can only state that the Marvel monster line had considerable potential nipped in the gestating bud. But if things move in cycles, as they say, then we suggest you keep your crucifix over the bed, your wolfbane on the door, and your eyes on the newsstands. You never know when the Marvel Monsters will stalk the musty magazine racks again.

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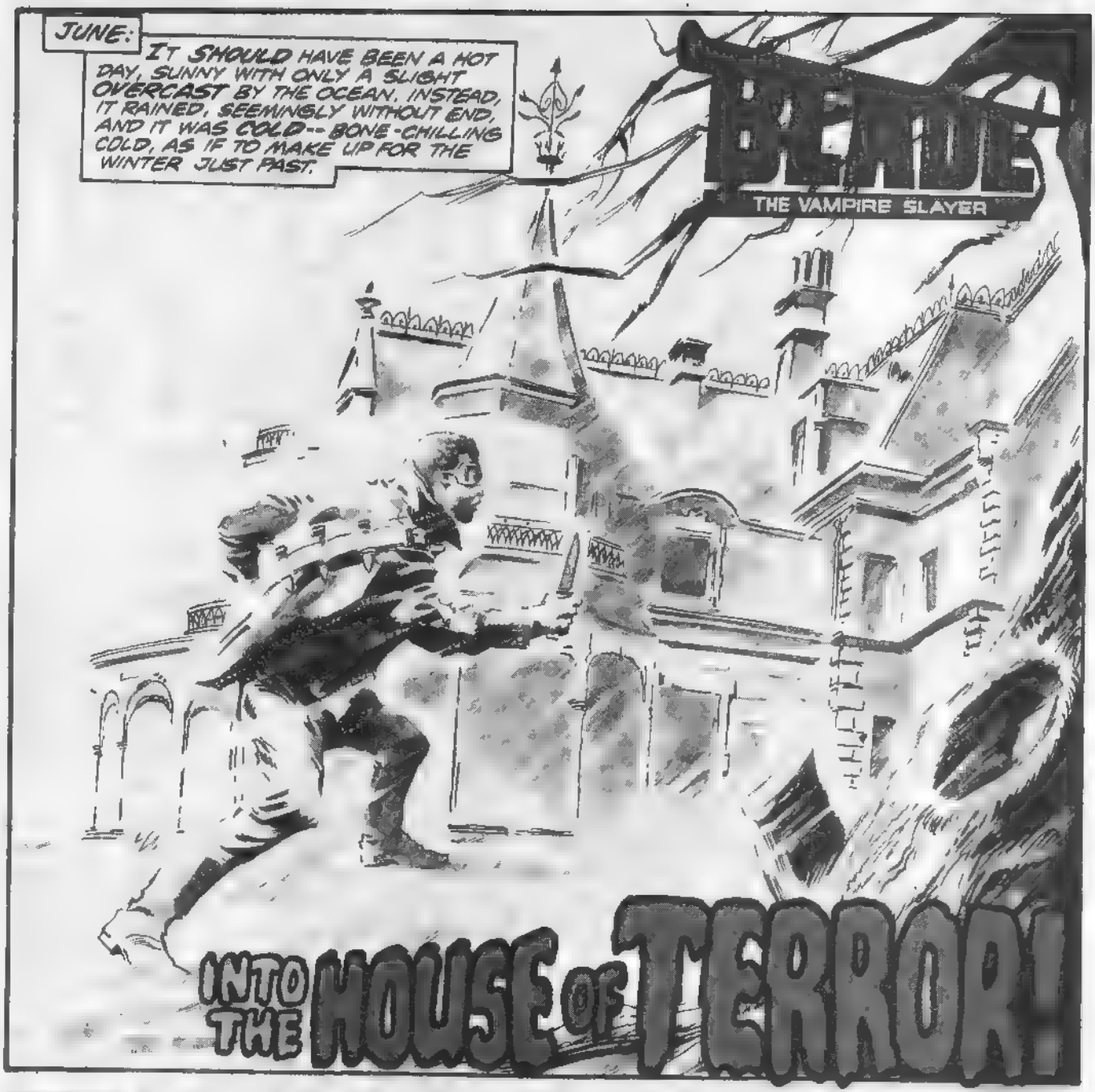
HELL! WHO AM I FOOLIN'? I CAN'T LEAVE. NOT NOW.
NOT 'TIL I'VE CHECKED THIS STINKIN' JOINT TWICE.
HOLD IT! NOISES!
RRRP
SO THE WEIRD CREEP WAS RIGHT AFTER ALL. LET'S HEAR IT FOR HONESTY.
REMIND ME TO SHAKE HIS SWEATY LITTLE HAND--
--PROVIDIN' I GET OUTTA HERE.
C'MON, YOU LOUSY BLOOD-SUCKERS! COME AND DIE!
LIKE A WELL-OILED MACHINE, BLADE WHIRLS--HIS WOODEN KNIFE SLASHING AT THE LIFELESS FLESH-FORMS WHICH ATTACK...
AND ALL THE WHILE, DARK SHADOWS COVER THEM WITH A THICK BLANKET OF NIGHT...
ONE FALLS, DEAD FOR A SECOND TIME, BUT OTHERS STILL ATTACK...
...OBSCURING THEIR SHAPES... BUT NOT THEIR STRENGTHS... NOT THEIR VAMPIRIC POWERS.
YOU'RE GOOD, CRUDS--I'LL GIVE YA THAT.
BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW GOOD YOU ARE--
--'CAUSE BLADE IS BETTER!


JUNE:
IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN A HOT DAY, SUNNY WITH ONLY A SLIGHT OVERCAST BY THE OCEAN. INSTEAD, IT RAINED, SEEMINGLY WITHOUT END, AND IT WAS COLD -- BONE-CHILLING COLD, AS IF TO MAKE UP FOR THE WINTER JUST PAST.
BLADE
THE VAMPIRE SLAYER
INTO THE HOUSE OF TERROR!

NEVER SHOULD'A COME HERE. DIDN'T LIKE THE SOUND OF THIS PLACE WHEN THAT DUDE FIRST MENTIONED IT.
CHALK ANOTHER ONE UP FOR COLOSSAL STUPIDITY.
BUT, HELL, I DIDN'T HAVE ANY OTHER CHOICES, DID I? I'M SUPPOSED TO BE A VAMPIRE-SLAYER--

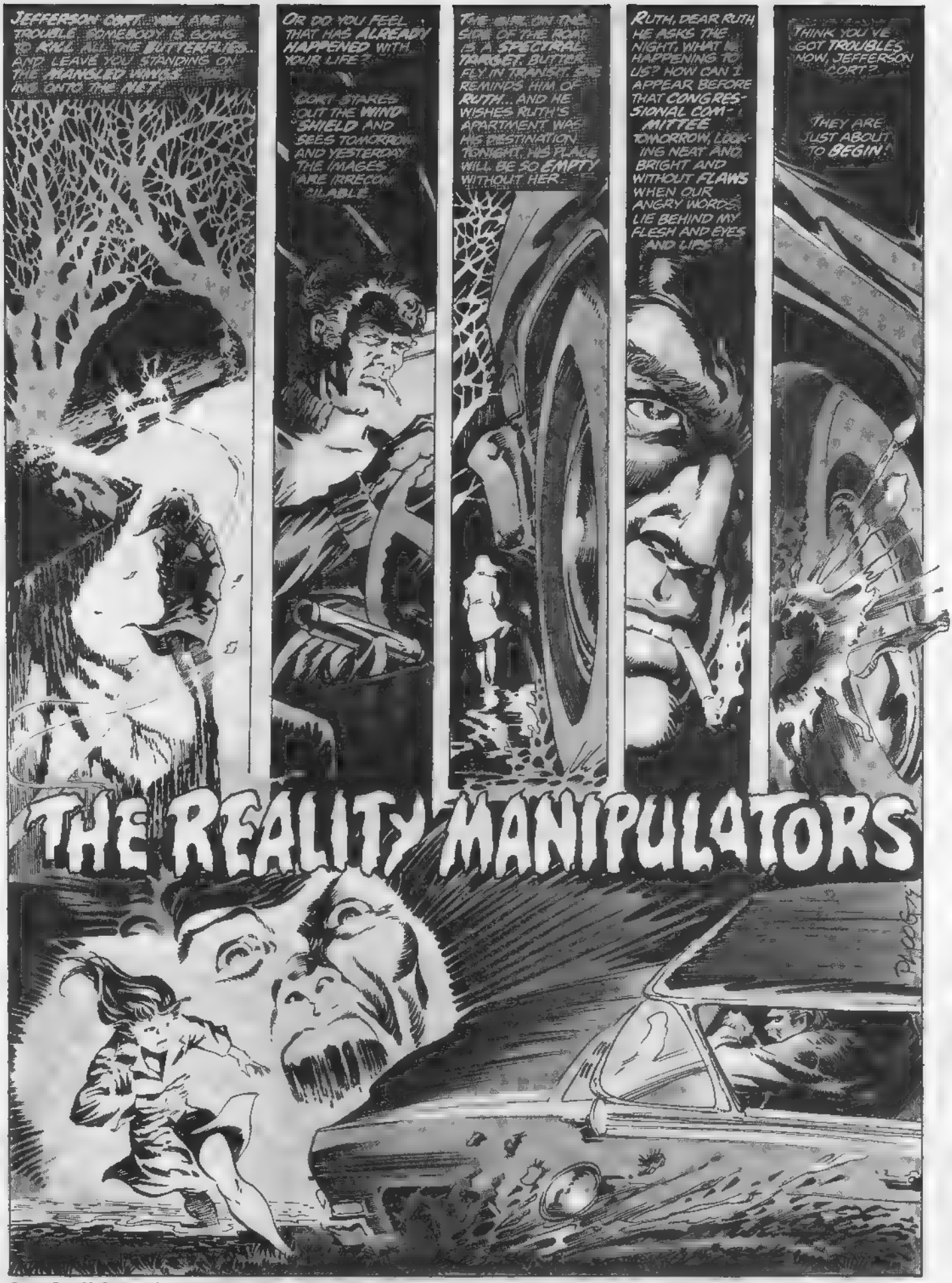
Story: Marv Wolfman Art: Gene Colan

WHAT?
HOLY JUMPIN' CRUD-- IT CAN'T BE!!
KIDS! THEY'RE KIDS!
MORE THAN CHILDREN, FOOL--AS YOU'LL SOON LEARN!
WE ARE DEATH-- YOUR DEATH!
WE HAVE LIVED HERE FOR CENTURIES, BLADE--PREYING ON THE BLOOD OF ADULT HUMANS...
DESTROYING ALL WHO COME WITHIN OUR GRASP!
DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT WE ARE, BLADE? DO YOU?
WE STAY HERE ALONE, ALL OF US CHILDREN OF ETERNITY. WE NEVER CHANGE-- NEVER AGE.. WE NEVER DIE!
FOR ONLY FOOLS DIE-- AND WE ARE HARDLY FOOLS.
GREAT GOING, HANDSOME. NOW WHAT?
DO I ATTACK 'EM? WIPE 'EM OUT?
GOD! I DON'T KNOW! I DON'T KNOW!
YOUR INDECISION ONLY FEEDS US, FOOL.
AS YOU SHALL FEED OUR BLOOD-LUST!

DON'T BET ON IT, FANGS.
REALLY, SCUM? THEN LET'S SEE WHAT THE ALL-POWERFUL VAMPIRE SLAYER CAN DO...
...TO AN INNOCENT CHILD! THING!
COME ON NOW, BLADE-- I'M HELPLESS. ONE THRUST OF YOUR KNIFE WILL KILL ME.
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR, BLADE?
OH MY GOD--
I CAN'T DO IT...
I GOTTA WIPE 'IM OUT-- BUT I CAN'T.
DAMMIT! I CAN'T!
HE'S A FREAKIN' KID!
SKANK!
AND THAT, DEAR, STUPID, MORTAL, IS WHY YOU HUMANS MUST EVENTUALLY GIVE WAY TO OUR RACE.
YOU ARE TOO SOFT... TOO WEAK TO PUT YOUR HEART TO THE TEST OF TRUE BATTLE!

IT IS TRUE, ISN'T IT, BLADE? THE ONLY REASON YOU HESITATED BEFORE THRUSTING YOUR KNIFE IN ME IS THAT YOU SAW A CHILD'S FACE FOR MINE.
BUT I'M NO CHILD, BLADE. NOT IN AGE. FOR I HAVE LIVED HERE FOR THREE HUNDRED YEARS--
--AS HAVE MY FELLOW CREATURES OF THE NIGHT.
WE MAY APPEAR AS YOUTH--BUT IN TRUTH... WE ARE OLDER THAN ANY HUMAN!
OLDER, AND WISER, BLADE. FOR, OUR INTELECTS HAVE GROWN THROUGHOUT THE CENTURIES...
STUFF IT, CRUD! YOU AND YOUR KIDDY CONQUERERS AREN'T MAKING IT OUTTA THIS HELL-HOLE--
--LET ALONE INTO THE BIG-CITIES!
...AND CONQUER!
SOON, BLADE--ALL HUMAN CHILDREN WILL DIE! AND IN THEIR PLACE--A VAMPIRIC ARMY WILL RISE...
YOUR LITTLE PEP-TALK AWAKENED ME, FANGS--
--'CAUSE NOW THAT I KNOW WHAT YOU ARE--
--NOTHIN' GONNA STOP ME FROM KILLIN' YOU!

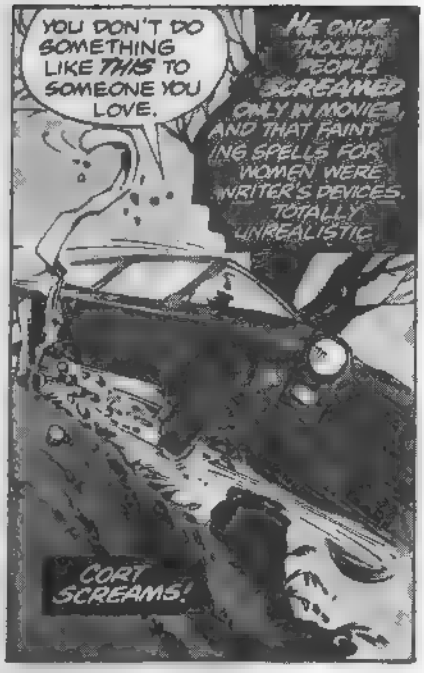
YOU TALKED TOO MUCH, CREEPS--'CAUSE MAYBE I DID HAVE A MENTAL BLOCK ABOUT DESTROYING YOU--
--BUT NO MORE!
NO MATTER WHAT YOU SEEM TO BE, I KNOW YOU'RE JUST THE STINKIN' UNDEAD--
AN' I JUST GOTTA KEEP TELLIN' MYSELF THAT.
CONVINCIN' MYSELF THAT YOU AREN'T REAL KIDS!
AN' IF I BELIEVE WHAT I KNOW TO BE TRUE--
--THERE'S NO WAY IN HELL THAT YOU'RE GONNA WIN!
...UNDERSTAND?
BLADE IS QUIET AS HE SLOWLY STEPS FROM THE ANCIENT MANSION BACK INTO THE BONE-CHILLING COLD!
BUT HE DOESN'T NOTICE THE WEATHER ... DOESN'T CARE ABOUT THE RAIN. IN TRUTH, HE DOESN'T EVEN WANT TO THINK ABOUT ANYTHING.
HE JUST WANTS TO FORGET WHAT HAD ... TO BE DONE.
HE JUST WANTS TO FORGET.


JEFFERSON CORT, YOU ARE IN TROUBLE. SOMEBODY IS GOING TO KILL THE BUTTERFLIES... AND LEAVE YOU STANDING ON THE MANGLED WINGS IN THE CATCH NET.
OR DO YOU FEEL THAT HAS ALREADY HAPPENED WITH YOUR LIFE?
CORT STARES OUT THE WIND SHIELD AND SEES TOMORROW AND YESTERDAY. THE IMAGES ARE IRRECONCILABLE.
THE GIRL ON THE SIDE OF THE ROAD IS A SPECTRAL TARGET. BUTTERFLY IN TRANSIT. SHE REMINDS HIM OF RUTH... AND HE WISHES RUTH'S APARTMENT WAS HIS DESTINATION TONIGHT. HIS PLACE WILL BE SO EMPTY WITHOUT HER.
RUTH, DEAR RUTH, HE ASKS THE NIGHT. WHAT IS HAPPENING TO US? HOW CAN I APPEAR BEFORE THAT CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE TOMORROW, LOOKING NEAT AND BRIGHT AND WITHOUT FLAWS WHEN OUR ANGRY WORDS LIE BEHIND MY FLESH AND EYES AND LIPS?
THINK YOU'VE GOT TROUBLES NOW, JEFFERSON CORT?
THEY ARE JUST ABOUT TO BEGIN!
THE REALITY MANIPULATORS

 Story: Don McGregor Art: Mike Ploog Tones: Marie Severin

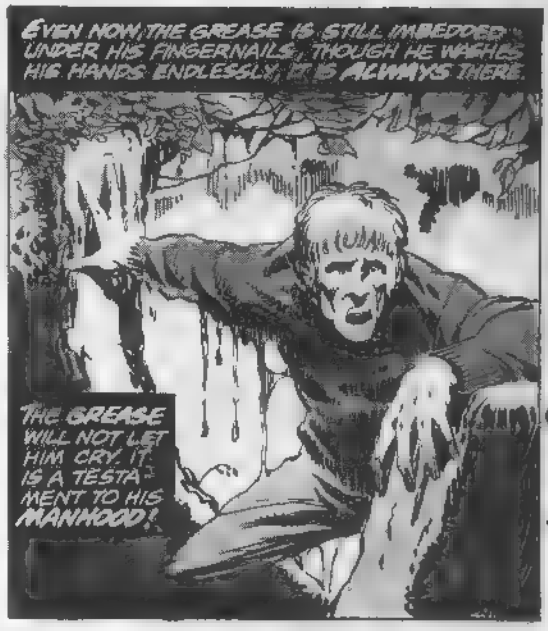
A HAND, ONCE FEMININE WITH LONG DELICATE FINGERS, CLUTCHES HIDEOUSLY AT HIS SHOULDER! THE SHARP POINT OF A BROKEN WRIST BONE PROTRUDES FROM HER FLESH!

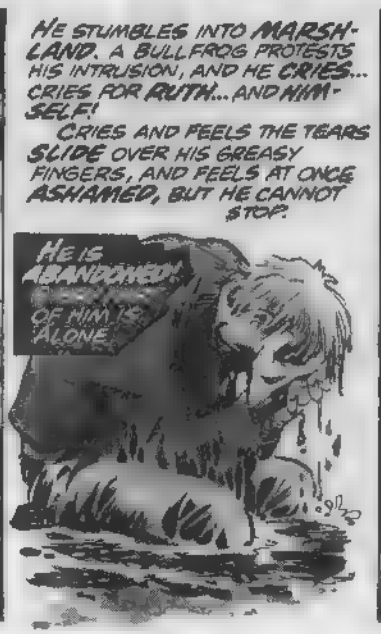
HER MOUTH, ONCE PARTED WITH DESIRE, NOW TWISTS OPEN, GROTESQUELY.
HER TEETH ARE DISCOLORED BY STREAKS OF BLOOD!
JEFF... WHY DID YOU DO THIS TO ME?
YOU SAID YOU LOVED ME.

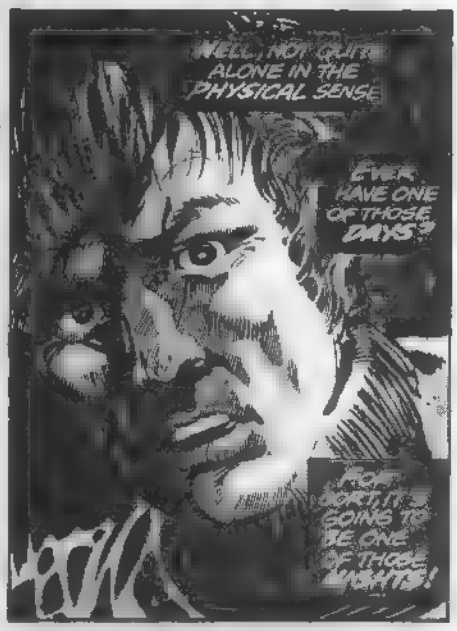

YOU DON'T DO SOMETHING LIKE THIS TO SOMEONE YOU LOVE.
HE ONCE THOUGH PEOPLE SCREAMED ONLY IN MOVIES, AND THAT FAINTING SPELLS FOR WOMEN WERE WRITER'S DEVICES. TOTALLY UNREALISTIC.
CORT SCREAMS!

THE SUBHUMAN THING RUSHES AT HIM, AND HE SPRAWLS TO THE WET GRASS.
RUTH IS WRAITH, A PART OF THE MIST, AND HE WANTS TO CRY FOR HER...

ESPECIALLY GARAGE MECHANICS, THEY NEVER CRY, EVEN WHEN THEY ARE GOING TO TESTIFY BEFORE A COURTROOM OF CONGRESSMEN.
BUT MEN DON'T CRY, HE TELLS HIMSELF, PURSUING HER.


EVEN NOW, THE GREASE IS STILL IMBEDDED UNDER HIS FINGERNAILS, THOUGH HE WASHES HIS HANDS ENDLESSLY, IT IS ALWAYS THERE.
THE GREASE WILL NOT LET HIM CRY. IT IS A TESTAMENT TO HIS MANHOOD!


HE STUMBLES INTO MARSHLAND. A BULLFROG PROTESTS HIS INTRUSION, AND HE CRIES... CRIES FOR RUTH... AND HIMSELF!
CRIES AND FEELS THE TEARS SLIDE OVER HIS GREASY FINGERS, AND FEELS AT ONCE ASHAMED, BUT HE CANNOT STOP.
HE IS ABANDONED! ALL OF HIM IS ALONE.

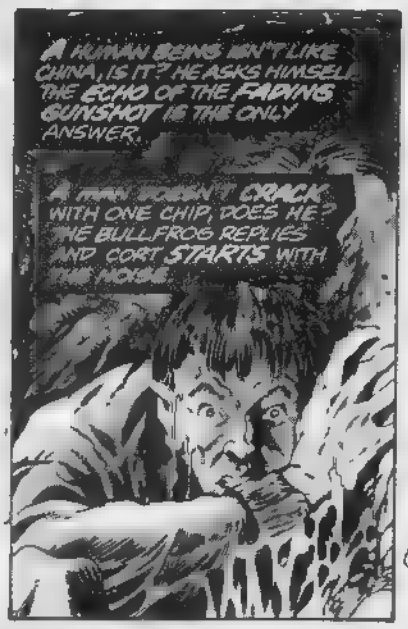

WELL, NOT QUITE ALONE IN THE PHYSICAL SENSE.
EVER HAVE ONE OF THOSE DAYS?
NOT ONLY IS HE GOING TO BE ONE OF THOSE NIGHTS!

SECONDS! THAT'S ALL IT TAKES!
A CAR MAY BE A NECESSITY OR A LUXURY, BUT IT STILL HAS THE WEIGHT AND VELOCITY TO UNLEASH A LETHAL POTENTIAL.
METAL DENTS UNDER THE IMPACT, RUINING THE POLISHED FINISH OF THE CAR.
FLESH BECOMES MEAT AND BONE, RIPPED AND SPLINTERED, INCAPABLE OF ITS OWN MOVEMENT.
THE SIGHT OF THE GIRL, ARMS FLUTTERING, RISING UP PAST HIS EYES IS STILL WITH CORT AS HE DASHES FROM THE CAR.
SHE LIES IN THE MIST, BLEEDING. THE WET MOSS ABSORBS HER BLOOD. THE SILVER NIGHT TURNS CRIMSON!
MISS?
PLEASE, MISS. ARE YOU... ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
OH SWEET LORD, PLEASE BE ALL RIGHT.
I TRIED TO SWERVE OUT THE WAY. IT WAS THE TIRE, BLEW RIGHT OUT FROM UNDER ME. CAN'T UNDERSTAND THAT, 'CAUSE THEY'RE NEW.
PLEASE ANSWER ME, MISS
YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT. I'LL... I'LL FIX THE TIRE... GET YOU TO A...
RUTH?
RUTH!!
HE HAS HELD THIS WOMAN COUNTLESS TIMES. HE HAS FELT HER WARMTH. NOW IT'S COLD, AND SHE LIES LIMP AND BROKEN. A CLIMBER OF THIGHS NO LONGER PROVOCATIVE.
RUTH, IF YOU COULD ONLY SPEAK TO ME.
HOW'D YOU GET OUT HERE? IT... IT JUST DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE, HONEY.
NONE!
HE FIXES THE TIRE, CHECKING ON HER AT INTERMITTENT TIMES. HER BLOOD DRIPS OFF THE LEATHER OF HIS
WHAT WILL THEY DO TO HIM WHEN HE BRINGS HER IN? LOCK HIM UP? WHAT DOES THE LAW DO IN A CAGE LIKE THIS?
CORT CURSES HIMSELF BITTERLY. WHAT THE HELL IS WRONG WITH YOU, MAN, HE CRIES IN SILENT SELF RECRIMINATION. RUTH IS DYING. AND ALL YOU CAN THINK ABOUT IS YOURSELF.
IT'S NOT OVER CORT!
IT'S NOT OVER BY A LONG SHOT!

DON'T BLOW IT, PHILLIP.
I DON'T EVER MISS... YOU KNOW THAT!
RUTH! PLEASE COME OUT. STOP THIS GAME OF HIDE AND SEEK.

I DIDN'T MEAN TO HURT YOU. I STILL DON'T KNOW HOW YOU GOT OUT HERE IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHE...
THE DEAFENING SILENCE EXPLODES WITH THE GUNSHOT. IT IS A SOUND CORT HAS SELDOM HEARD IN REAL LIFE... BUT IMMEDIATELY, INSTINCTIVELY HE KNOWS WHAT IT IS.

THE MURKY WATER IS COLD, FLIRTING UP HIS TROUSER LEG, HUGGING HIS SHIRT TO HIS BODY.
HE HOLDS ONTO HIS SHOULDERS AS IF THAT WILL KEEP HIM IN ONE PIECE.


A HUMAN BEING AIN'T LIKE CHINA, IS IT? HE ASKS HIMSELF. THE ECHO OF THE FADING GUNSHOT IS THE ONLY ANSWER.
A MAN DOESN'T CRACK WITH ONE CHIP, DOES HE? THE BULLFROG REPLIES AND CORT STARTS WITH

AND THEN THERE IS ANOTHER SOUND!
IT COMES FROM HIS LEFT, FROM THE INTERIOR OF THE SWAMP, A SOUND THAT CATCHES THE AIR IN HIS LUNGS. A SOFT, OOZING SOUND. BLOOD BEING SUCKED NOISILY THROUGH A STRAW!
RUTH?

SHE RISES LANGUIDLY, REACHING OUT FOR HIM.
IT IS NOT AN ENTICING GESTURE, IT IS A PROFANITY OF AFFECTION.
SHE SPEAKS, AND IT IS RUTH'S VOICE. AND THE WORDS ISSUE FROM LIPS THAT DRIP DARKLY GREEN SLIME.

WHY DID YOU DO IT, JEFF? WAS IT BECAUSE, LAST NIGHT, I ACCUSED YOU OF TRYING TO PROVE YOUR MANHOOD BY TESTIFYING AT THIS RINKY-DINK COMMITTEE MAKING BELIEVE IT'S EXPOSING CITY GRAFT WHILE USING YOU AS A PRIME WITNESS!
WHY DON'T YOU TRY PROVING IT IN BED?
ONE CHIP MIGHT NOT DO IT, JEFFERSON CORT, BUT HOW ABOUT TWO... OR BETTER STILL... THREE CHIPS INTO THE PSYCHE?

CORT FLEES, BUT THE VOID CHASES AFTER HIM--
--CONDEMNING--
--AND EMANING!
VINES THRUST THEMSELVES IN FRONT OF HIS THROAT--
--GNARLED ROPES TWIST OUT OF THE MUD THAT CLUTCHES AT HIS RUNNING FEET.
HE IS NOT USED TO RUNNING AND THE FACT SOUNDS MARSHLY THROUGH HIS GASPING LIPS.
A WARM GLOW PIERCES THE DARK SPANISH MOSS EMBRACES THE GLEN
BETTER THINK THIS OUT, CORT, BABY. YOU PROBABLY LOOK LIKE THE FRANKENSTEIN MONSTER IN "THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN," UNLESS THAT'S A BLIND MAN IN THERE, YOU'LL SCARE THE HELL OUT OF HIM.
STEALTHILY, HIS BREATHING STILL LOUD AND FIERCE, HE APPROACHES THE CABIN.
IN HIS MIND, HE ARGUES WITH RUTH THAT IT WAS NOTHING LIKE SHE CLAIMED. HIS DECIDING TO TESTIFY WAS NO MACHISMO ACT. JUST THAT... SOMEBODY HAS TO TAKE A STAND ...AND HOPE THE WHOLE THING ISN'T A SHAM!
THE GROWL BRINGS HIM UP SHORT--
--SCATTERING HIS THOUGHTS.
--ALONG WITH INTIMATE MEMORIES OF RUTH THAT ARE FREE FROM CONDEMNATION.
WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU, REAPER? YOU'RE THE DAMNDEST PAIN IN THE ASS I EVER HEERD!
WELL, NOW, WAIT A SEC, REAP, OLD BOY, I MIGHTA BEEN A BIT QUICK WITH JUDGEMENT. WHUT YOU DOING OUT HERE, BOY?
AN ACCIDENT... UP ON THE ROAD. MY CAR!
I SWEAR YOU'RE SPEAKING GIBBERISH.
SOMEBODY SHOT AT ME!
WHUT'S THAT?
I CAME DOWN HERE, LOOKING FOR RUTH. AN' SOMEBODY SHOT AT ME!
WITH A GUN?
WHAT ELSE DO PEOPLE SHOOT AT EACH OTHER WITH?

HEH HEH. THAT'S SOME SENSA HUMOR YOU GOT THERE, BOY. WHUT'D YOU SAY YOUR NAME WUZ?
CORT JEFFERSON CORT
LOOK, MY GIRL'S BACK THERE SOMEWHERE.
SHORE SHE IS. BETCHA SHE'D RATHER SEE YOU ALONE, BOY. BUT IF'N YOU WANT OLD AMOS T. TO TAKE A LOOK AT THIS SPOT WHERE'S YOU SAY SUMBODY SHOT ATCHA, YOU JUST LEAD THE WAY.
RIGHT HERE!
RIGHT WHERE?
OH, WAIT A MINUTE. I DON'T BELIEVE THIS. A SLUG TOOK A CHUNK OUT OF THAT TREE RIGHT ABOVE MY HEAD.
SHORE IT DID, BOY. WHERE'S THIS GIRL OF YOURS GONE TO?
I DON'T... KNOW
SHE'S HURT... I THINK SHE'S HURT BAD. BUT I DON'T KNOW WHERE SHE IS.
YOU FOLLER ME BACK TO MY PLACE, BOY. CAIN'T LEAVE YOU OUT HERE, YOU'LL GETCHA SELF MORE MESSED UP'N YOU ALREADY ARE.
BETTER STEP ON IT, GINGER. PHASE THREE IS DUE TO COMMENCE.
THIS'LL KILL HIM.
THE AIR IN THE CABIN IS COMPOSED OF BURNT COFFEE GROUNDS, BACON GREASE, AND A SUFFOCATING BLEND OF PIPE TOBACCO THAT CORT IS SURE MUST BE BANNED ON THE OPEN MARKET.
YOU KNOW, I HATE TO TELL YA THIS, BOY, BUT SOUND CARRIES A LONG WAYS OUT HERE--
--AN' NOT TO ADD TO YOUR TROUBLES, BUT IF'N A SHOT WUZ FIRED... OLD AMOS T. WOULDA HEERD IT.
I WAS JUST THINKING THAT SAME THING.
LOOK, YOU MIND IF I USE YOUR PHONE?
LOOKS LIKE YORE ALREADY AT IT, BOY.
THE SHOT CLEARLY DIDN'T, JEFFERSON CORT, AND YOU WONDER IF YOU'LL EVER BE HEARD AGAIN.

CORT STANDS AT THE PHONE, AND THOUGH HE IS CHILLED HE BEGINS TO SWEAT AS HE TRIES TO REMEMBER THE CODE NUMBER FOR A NEW YORK NUMBER.
LET'S SEE, 75A IS THE EXCHANGE... AH, BUT IS IT 64 OR 68? OR...
AMOS T.!
A SLOW SQUEEK FROM THE DOORWAY MAKES HIM LOOK UP.
RUTH STANDS THERE, DRIPPING BLOOD AND FEN WATER ONTO THE WOODEN FLOOR.

WHAT'SA MATTER, BOY?
WHAT THE... DON'T YOU SEE HER?!!
SEE WHO? THERE AIN'T NOBODY HERE. YOU BEEN MESSIN' ROUND WITH SOMMA THAT FUNNY WEED.
I'VE COME FOR YOU, JEFF. JULIETT FOR HER ROMEO. WE DIE TOGETHER!

HEY, WHUT YOU THINK YORE UP TO?
YOU WANTED TO CARRESS ME LAST NIGHT, JEFF, SWEET.
COME, SPEND THE CAST MOMENTS OF YOUR LIFE IN MY ARMS.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU ARE... BUT I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE NOT--
--YOU'RE NOT MY RUTH!

HEY, BOY, YOU HAVIN' OF OF THEM THERE HALO-SIN-ATIONS
YOU GIMME BACK THAT PIECE FORE THEM MARY J. WANNA DREAMS OF YORN GET SUMBODY HURT!
IT HAPPENS AS QUICKLY AS THE CAR ACCIDENT. AMOS GRABS FOR THE RIFLE, YANKING IT TOWARD HIM, AND THE SHOTGUN SEEMS TO FIRE ITSELF INTO HIS CHEST.
A MOMENT AGO, YOU THOUGHT YOU'D REDISCOVERED REALITY. HADN'T YOU, JEFFERSON CORT? YOU REFOUND IT, IN THE SMELL OF A CHOKING PIPE AND THE SMELL OF BACON GREASE AND AMOS T.'S VOICE.
BUT ALL THAT'S GONE NOW. SAY GOODBYE TO IT, JEFFERSON CORT.

IT WASN'T A GREAT REALITY, BUT IT WAS BETTER THAN THE HORROR FANTASY IN WHICH HE'D BEEN SNARED. BUTTERFLIES RIPPED [illegible] WAITING TO BE MATTED.
AS HE CALLS LAWYER PRINE'S NUMBER HESITANTLY (IS IT 88 OR 86?) HE WONDERS HOW ANYONE CAN BE TURNED ON BY SPLATTERING GUTS AND RIPPED INTESTINES.
BUT WHAT FRIGHTENS HIM MOST IS THAT SOME PEOPLE DO.
NATHAN... THIS IS CORT!
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? YOU CAN'T HAVE FORGOTTEN THE TRIAL CONVENES TOMORROW!
I NEED HELP, NATE. I JUST KILLED AN OLD MAN... AND SOMEBODY WHO LOOKS LIKE RUTH AND KNOWS ALL ABOUT US, BUT...
DON'T GO ANYWHERE ELSE. GET YOURSELF OVER TO MY OFFICE... QUICK!

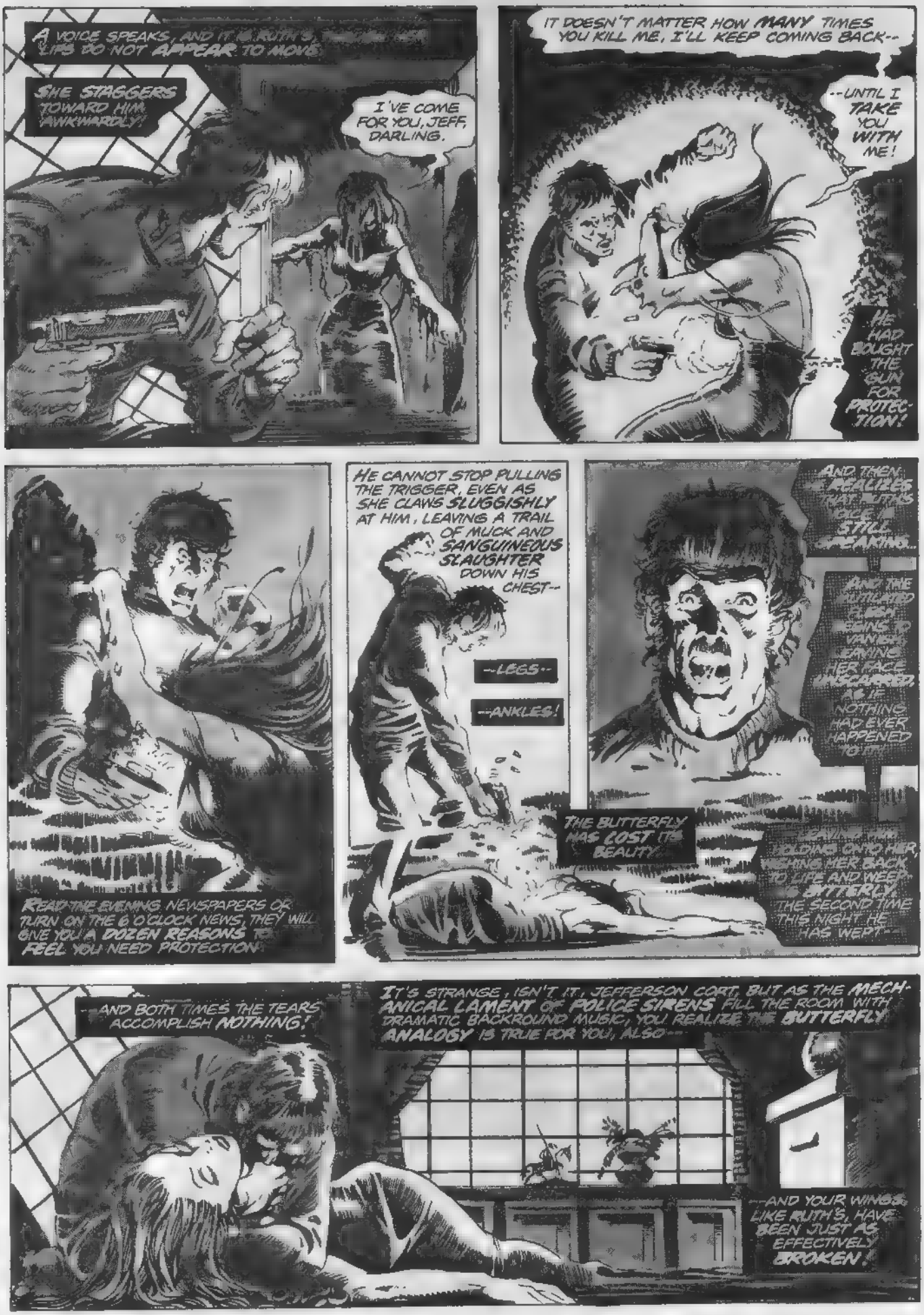
HER NAME IS RUTH JORDAN--
...AND SHE HAS SPENT THE LAST HOUR AND A HALF SHINING HER NAILS, BOTH FINGERS AND TOES.

...AND HAS GONE THROUGH HER WARDROBE TRYING TO DECIDE WHAT TO WEAR.
IT IS MUCH LIKE THE PLUMAGE OF THE PEACOCK... EXCEPT RUTH ISN'T TRYING TO ATTRACT A MATE.

BUT SHE HAS ATTRACTED A FIGURE FROM THE SHADOWS.
A FIGURE OUT OF SUBURBIA AND METROPOLITAN NIGHTMARES. THE INTRUDER SAVAGELY INVADING THE SANCTUARY.

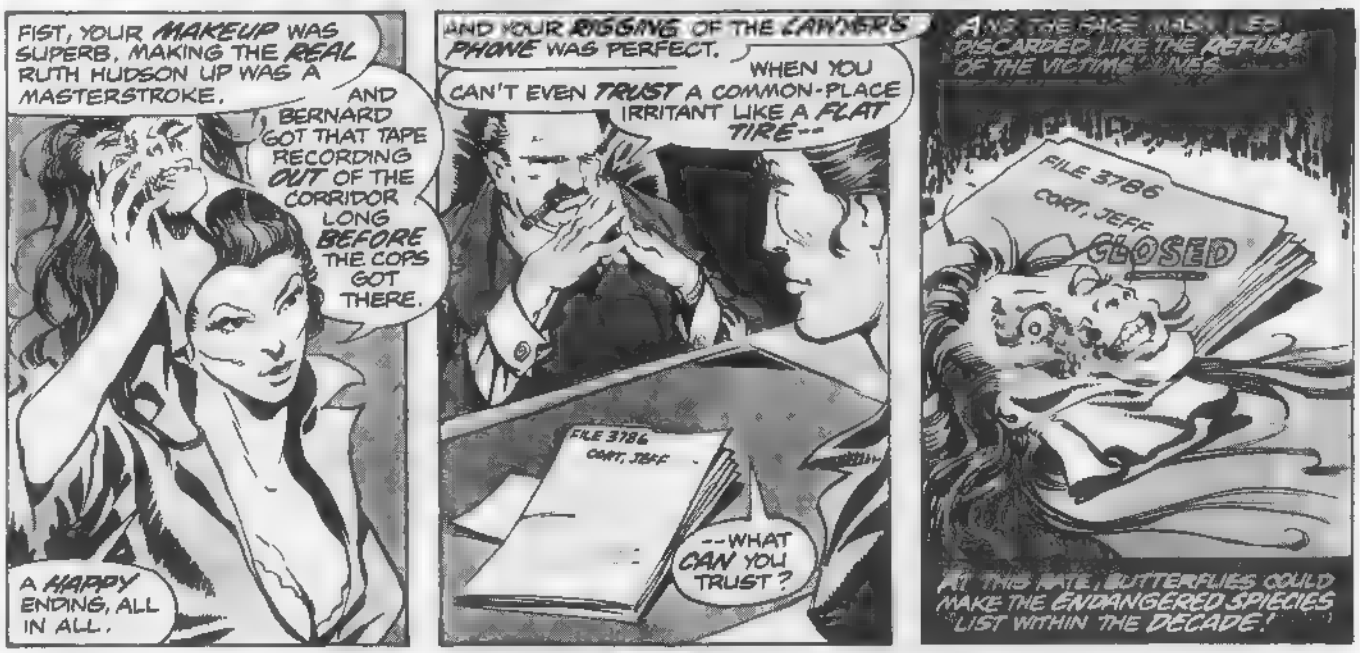
RUTH GASPS, BREATHING DEEPLY, AND THE ANESTHESIA FILLS HER LUNGS--
...BUT DOES NOT DIMINISH THE FEAR IN HER EYES.

--NOT EVEN WHEN HER EYELIDS FLUTTER CLOSED DOES THE TERROR ABATE! BUTTERFLY WINGS STRUGGLE SPASMODICALLY, AND BECOME STILL!
ALMOST LIKE AN AUTOMATION THE MAN BEGINS HIS TASK OF GIVING TO HER SEXUALITY
--AND CAPITALIZING EFFICIENTLY, ON HER VULNERABILITY.
ANOTHER CHIP IN THE CHINA. THE CRACK SPREADS JAGGEDLY, SLICING INTO THE BRAIN.
JEFF, YOU LOOK LIKE HELL. WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?
I TOLD YOU OVER THE PHONE.
YOU TOLD ME WHAT OVER THE PHONE?
NATE, DON'T YOU REMEMBER--
--MY CALL?
I'VE BEEN IN MY OFFICE ALL NIGHT, JEFF--
--AND THE PHONE HASN'T RUNG ONCE!
TELL THE STORY, JEFFERSON CORT. TELL IT AGAIN!
LOOK, JEFF, IT'S NOT UNUSUAL FOR WITNESSES TO HAVE A BAD NIGHT BEFORE THEY'RE DUE TO TESTIFY.
WHAT HAS... HAPPENED... TO ME... IS MORE THAN...
UNUSUAL.
YOU BETTER GET YOURSELF SOME REST, YOU GO INTO THAT COURTROOM TOMORROW LOOKING LIKE THIS AND THE DEFENSE WILL BRAND YOU A PARANOID DEPRESSIVE--
--AND THAT'LL JUST BE FOR OPENERS!
PARANOID DEPRESSIVE? HOW ABOUT SCHIZOPHRENIC, JEFFERSON CORT? OR BETTER STILL, WHY NOT LABEL YOU A PSYCHO-SEXUAL DEVIATE?
GOD, THEY'VE GOT ENOUGH TERMS TO DRIVE A MAN CRAZY!
WITH THAT THOUGHT, HE SEES THE GUN!
HE REACHES FOR IT, ALMOST ASKING ALOUD WHAT IN HELL IS IT DOING OUT OF HIS BEDROOM DRESSER.
THE DOOR OPENS, BUT THIS ONE IS SILENT.
MUD AND BLOOD AND MARSH PULP DRIP ONTO THE RUG.
IT IS THAT SOUND THAT CORT HEARS FIRST!


A VOICE SPEAKS, AND IT IS RUTH'S, LIPS DO NOT APPEAR TO MOVE.
SHE STAGGERS TOWARD HIM, AWKWARDLY!
I'VE COME FOR YOU, JEFF, DARLING.
IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW MANY TIMES YOU KILL ME, I'LL KEEP COMING BACK--
--UNTIL I TAKE YOU WITH ME!
HE HAD BOUGHT THE GUN FOR PROTECTION!
READ THE EVENING NEWSPAPERS OR TURN ON THE 6 O'CLOCK NEWS, THEY WILL GIVE YOU A DOZEN REASONS TO FEEL YOU NEED PROTECTION!
HE CANNOT STOP PULLING THE TRIGGER, EVEN AS SHE CLAWS SLUGGISHLY AT HIM, LEAVING A TRAIL OF MUCK AND SANGUINEOUS SLAUGHTER DOWN HIS CHEST--
--LEGS--
--ANKLES!
AND THEN, GRADUALLY, AS IF THIS WERE STILL HAPPENING...
AND THE BUTTERFLY HAS LOST ITS BEAUTY!
FOLDING INTO HER, TAKING HER BACK TO LIFE AND WEEPING BITTERLY, THE SECOND TIME THIS NIGHT HE HAS WEPT--
--AND BOTH TIMES THE TEARS ACCOMPLISH NOTHING!
IT'S STRANGE, ISN'T IT, JEFFERSON CORT, BUT AS THE MECHANICAL LAMENT OF POLICE SIRENS FILL THE ROOM WITH DRAMATIC BACKGROUND MUSIC, YOU REALIZE THE BUTTERFLY ANALOGY IS TRUE FOR YOU, ALSO--
--AND YOUR WINGS, LIKE RUTH'S, HAVE BEEN JUST AS EFFECTIVELY BROKEN!

IT IS A CLOUDLESS MORNING, AND THE SKIES ARE A BLUE THAT ARE AN INDUSTRIALIST'S DREAM. A RICH, NOSTALGIC BLUE THAT CLAIMS THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS POLLUTION--
--OF THE AIR.
AND INDIRECTLY, THE SYSTEM OF WHICH THEY ARE A PART.
VICTIM'S ANONYMOUS IS A PART OF THAT SYSTEM, ALTHOUGH IT HAS NO SEDATE STENCILLING ON ITS DOOR TO MARK IT AS SUCH. THEY HAVE LEARNED SOME THINGS SINCE WATERGATE.
VAN
SOME PEOPLE IN THE KNOW CLAIM THEY HAVE SEEN A CARD FOR THIS PUBLICALLY NONEXISTENT ORGANIZATION WHICH READS:
WE DON'T CARE WHO THE VICTIMS ARE... WE'LL GET TO THEM.
THE PEOPLE QUOTED WERE PROBABLY BEING FACETIOUS.

PHILIP, I REALLY LIKE PLAYING THESE OLD GEEZERS. IT'S A PART YOU CAN GET INTO.
UNDERSTAND ME, BOY?
JEEZ, DID HE FALL FOR IT HOOK, LINE AND SINKER... OR DID HE FALL FOR IT?
YOU WOULD, TOO, MR. FIST, IF SOMEONE AS EFFICIENT AS WE ARE WENT AFTER YOU.


FIST, YOUR MAKEUP WAS SUPERB, MAKING THE REAL RUTH HUDSON UP WAS A MASTERSTROKE.
AND BERNARD GOT THAT TAPE RECORDING OUT OF THE CORRIDOR LONG BEFORE THE COPS GOT THERE.
A HAPPY ENDING, ALL IN ALL.
AND YOUR RIGGING OF THE LAWYER'S PHONE WAS PERFECT.
WHEN YOU CAN'T EVEN TRUST A COMMON-PLACE IRRITANT LIKE A FLAT TIRE--
FILE 3786
CORT, JEFF
--WHAT CAN YOU TRUST?
AND THE FACE WAS DISCARDED LIKE THE REFUSE OF THE VICTIMS' LIVES.
FILE 3786
CORT, JEFF
CLOSED
AT THIS RATE, BUTTERFLIES COULD MAKE THE ENDANGERED SPIECIES LIST WITHIN THE DECADE!

EGYPT. SAND SIFTS LIKE THE DUST OF AGES OVER SUN-RAPED, ARID GROUND. AND EACH GRAIN SEEMS TO WHISPER OF SECRETS HIDDEN, PREGNANT IN THE SOIL.
IT WHISPERS OF ANCIENT KINGS AND GODS, WHISPERS THAT DRAW MEN IN SEARCH OF KNOWLEDGE AND FAME. ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPEDITIONS...
"...EXPEDITIONS SUCH AS THIS ORGANIZED BY DR. LIONEL HUMPHRIES, WHICH DISCOVERED THIS WOMB OF HISTORY...
MY GOD! I HAVE HEARD THE LEGENDS... OVER AND OVER AGAIN! BUT I'M A MAN OF SCIENCE, HUMPHRIES... HOW CAN SUCH A CREATURE BE POSSIBLE ?!?!
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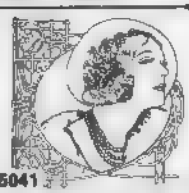
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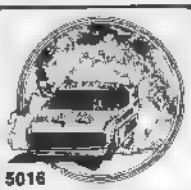
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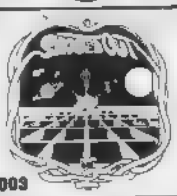
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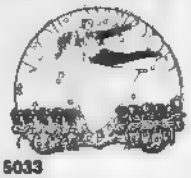
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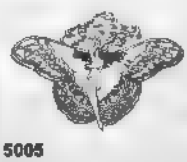
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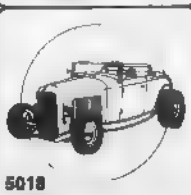
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SIR THOMPSON... THIS HEAT IS INHUMAN! I SUGGEST WE GIVE THE WORKERS A SHORT REST PERIOD.
YOU'RE TOO SOFT, DR. HUMPHRIES! WE'RE ON TO SOMETHING HERE--LET THE BLIGHTERS EARN THEIR PAY!
"...SUN, WORK, TEMPERAMENT--
"...TENSENESS A VIRUS IN INCUBATION--
"...SO EASILY--
"...PAIN FULLY--
"...BECOMES FEAR!
EEE-YAAHHHH!
"MY OWN ALARM ECHOED BUT WAS DROWNED IN THE WORKERS' SCREAMS OF AGONY. I KNEW THE REPERCUSSIONS THAT WERE TO COME FROM THIS FEAR, BUT I WOULD NOT BE STOPPED...!
THE SERPENT! IT IS GUIDED BY THE SPIRITS OF THOSE WHO WATCH OVER THE TREASURES OF THE ANCIENTS! WE WILL BE CURSED IF WE...
BALDERDASH! A COBRA WAS DISTURBED AND CHOSE AS ITS INSTINCTS DIRECTED, TO DEFEND ITSELF. NO MORE, NO LESS...AND NO CURSE!
SIR HUMPHRIES PRESSED HIS POINT, BUT LITTLE CAME OF IT! THE MEN FLED...
RUDDY HEATHEN COWARDS! BELIEVING ALL THAT ROT ABOUT CURSES FROM ANCIENT GODS...!
WELL, LADS, THE WORK GETS HARDER FROM HERE ON IN... BUT WE WILL CONTINUE... JUST THE FOUR OF US!
"THE WIND STIRRED AND SEEMED TO SPEAK TO THE WHISPERING SAND! HUMPHRIES AND THE OTHERS MADE NO REPLY, FEELING A SLIGHT SHIVER IN SPITE OF THE MID-DAY HEAT...
"NOAK WAS REPRIEVED. I FELT BOTH RELIEF AND THE TENACIOUSNESS OF SUCCESS. BUT IN THE LATE AFTERNOON...!
OVER HERE... QUICKLY! ALL OF YOU!
BY GEORGE, WE'VE DONE IT, LADS!

A TOMB-- AN UNOPENED TOMB! IT'S ALL OURS, GENTLEMEN!
WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR...LET'S OPEN HER UP!
NO! IT'S TOO LATE IN THE DAY! I PROPOSE A GOOD NIGHT'S REST, THAT WE BE READY FOR A LONG DAY TOMORROW!
"HUMPHRIES WAS LESS THAN SATISFIED WITH THE WAITING POLICY-- NEEDLESS TO SAY, I WAS AS ANXIOUS AS HE! HUMPHRIES WAS A MAN TOO ACUTELY FEELING THE YEARS STRETCHING LONG WRINKLES ABOUT HIS NECK.
"THIS MIGHT VERY WELL BE HIS LAST TRIP TO EGYPT... HIS LAST CHANCE FOR THE FAME AND NOTORIETY THIS NEW TOMB PROMISED. I CAN [illegible] THESE THINGS IN A MAN..!
"HUMPHRIES WORKED NEARLY ALL NIGHT ON THE HIEROGLYPHICS ON THAT TOMB DOOR!
"DAWN SPLASHED TEPID AND GOLDEN OVER THE ENCAMPMENT; OVER MEN WHO HAD TOSSED AND TURNED, SUSPENDED IN A HALF-WAKING, HALF-SLEEPING DREAM FANTASY...
"...NOW THIS DRUG, ANTICIPATION, COURSED LIKE LIFE-GIVING ELIXIR THROUGH THEM, GIVING ANIMATION TO SUN-WEARIED BODIES...
THE SPIRIT OF THE MOON, GUARDIAN OF THE WAY... IF YOUR TRANSLATIONS ARE CORRECT, DR HUMPHRIES THAT'S WHAT WE WILL FIND DOWN HERE!
"MUSTY SHADOWS OF THE PAST PERISHED LIKE COBWEBS IN THE ONRUSH OF SWEET DESERT AIR...
"...AIR THAT HADN'T KISSED THESE TIME-CHASTE WALLS IN NEARLY AN AEON!
INCREDIBLE! NEVER IN MY LIFE HAVE I KNOWN A TOMB TO REACH THIS FAR DOWN! THE ENGINEERING ALONE IS STAGGERING-- LET ALONE THE SYMBOLIC IMPLICATIONS...
OBSERVE, THOMPSON, THE PARADOXES OF A CULTURE. THE DEPTH OF THIS CHAMBER-- THEY WERE DELIVERING THIS MAN TO HELL. YET THEY FEARED HIM ENOUGH TO LEAVE HIM WITH MORE TREASURE THAN I'VE SEEN IN A LIFETIME!

AGAIN, SIR THOMPSON, PARADOXES! THE ARCHITECTURE OF THIS TOMB INDICATES IT HOUSES SOMEONE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE!
YET THE SARCOPHAGUS IS HARDLY MORE ORNATE THAN THAT OF A FAVORED ROYAL SERVANT, AS IF...
SKIP THE PARADOXES, HUMPHRIES-- OUR QUESTIONS WILL BE BETTER ANSWERED WHEN WE REMOVE THE LID!
EASY, LADS-- THIS LID IS BLASTED HEAVY! SET IT DOWN GENTLY AND WATCH TO YOUR FINGERS, NOW!
BLIGHTERS... ALWAYS MAKING THINGS SO BLOODY DIFFICULT!
"THE LID SCRAPED DOWN, THE CHALKY BARK OF STONE ON STONE.
"A SOUND LOST ON MEN WHOSE EYES WERE TRANSFIXED IN ASTONISHMENT...
...GOD...
ANUBIS... IT- IT CAN'T BE! BUT IT IS! ANUBIS, "WATCHER OF THE DEAD!" A MERE LEGEND...
...YET I SEE HIM, FUR GRAFTED IMPERCEPTIBLY INTO FLESH...
WE ARE RATIONAL MEN, DR. HUMPHRIES! OUR MINDS TELL US THIS MUST BE A FAKE. BUT IT ISN'T AND THAT SCARES US-- BECAUSE ALL OF A BLOODY SUDDEN OUR BOOKS DON'T HAVE ANY ANSWERS!
OUCH...
DAMN!
STUPID... HAND SHAKING SO MUCH, I SLIPPED-- CUT MYSELF! STILL, IT'S LITTLE MORE THAN A SCRATCH. I'LL BE FINE!
ALL THE SAME, WE'D BETTER GET BACK TO CAMP AND TREAT THAT! IF IT GETS INFECTED, YOU COULD BE IN SERIOUS TROUBLE!

"NIGHT CLOAKED ITSELF ABOUT THE DIMINISHED ENCAMPMENT. EVERYONE SAT ABOUT IN SPEECHLESS HUDDLES, SENSING AN ACUTE ILL-EASE EXCHANGING BETWEEN THEM...
THE LONELY SILENCE WAS BROKEN BY DR. HUMPHRIES...
REGINALD, I THINK WE SHOULD PACK UP THE--BODY--AND RETURN TO LONDON! IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT "IT" BE GIVEN PROPER STUDY!
AGREED...
ANUBIS MUST BE CAREFULLY STUDIED-- BUT TO LEAVE NOW WOULD ONLY UNNECESSARILY SLOW THINGS DOWN! NO, WE MUST HAVE TYME TO EXAMINE THE ARTIFACTS-- THEY HOLD THE KEY TO THIS PUZZLE!
NOW, GENTLEMEN, I SUGGEST WE TURN IN. WE'LL BE UP AGAIN WITH THE DAWN...
"HUMPHRIES WALKED AWAY WORDLESSLY...
"DAYS PASSED. THE MEN BUSIED THEMSELVES COLLECTING, EXAMINING AND CLASSIFYING ARTIFACTS. BUT ALL THE WHILE CONCERN AND TENSION GREW AMONGST DR. HUMPHRIES AND HIS STUDENTS...
I'M WORRIED, SIR THOMPSON... YOU HAVE BEEN WORKING YOURSELF INTO A TEDIUM...
...AND YOUR HAND-- IT HAS NOT BEEN HEALING WELL!
YOUR CONCERN HAS BEEN NOTED AND APPRECIATED... BUT I INSIST WE CONTINUE!

"THAT NIGHT, AS DARKNESS' GLOVED HAND BROUGHT THE STILLNESS OF SLEEP TO THE CAMP...
..UMMMPHHRR...
SKRIK!
HRUMFF... WHAT? THAT SHADOW... THOMPSON, IS THAT YOU?? ANSWER ME!??
"THAT ANSWER WAS NOT LONG IN COMING...
"...IT CAME SILENT AND SWIFT WITH A BLOOD FEVER THAT TORE THE SCREAM AWAY BEFORE HUMPHRIES COULD UTTER IT!"
"HUMPHRIES WAS NOT A MAN WHO GAVE WAY EASILY TO FEAR, NOT EVEN OF DEATH! BUT IT WAS TERROR THAT WAS EMBLAZONED ON HIS FEATURES WHEN HE WAS FOUND...
"THE NEXT MORNING!
LORD... BLIMEY!
HORRIBLE... SOME WILD DOG OR JACKAL! WELL THAT DOES IT...
...THE WORKMEN WE COULD LOSE, BUT NOT HUMPHRIES! WE RETURN TO LONDON...!
WE'LL LEAVE BEHIND SOME OF THE MORE COMMON RELICS, BUT THE REST GOES, ESPECIALLY THE THINGS WE FAILED TO IDENTIFY, AND, WHATEVER YOU DO, DON'T DROP ANUBIS THERE...
WE'RE STILL IN FOR A BLOODY AWFUL TIME CONVINCING THE ACADEMY IT'S NOT A HOAX!
THE SUN BLAZED DOWN, TOUCHING WHITE THE SAND...
HOPEFULLY THIS FILL WILL KEEP THE DAMNED TOMB SCAVENGERS OUT WHEN OUR DISCOVERY IS ANNOUNCED...
...BUT I DOUBT IT!
"...SAND RETURNED TO PLACE, A DECEPTIVE TESTIMONY OF TIME AND PEACE THAT RETAINS THE FLESH OF DR. HUMPHRIES IN GRIM MORTGAGE...

"SHORTLY THEREAFTER, THE SHIP ARRIVED AT ITS DESTINATION BEARING TWO GRIM ADDITIONS TO ITS MYSTERIOUS CARGO...!
FIRST HUMPHRIES, THEN THE TWO STUDENTS... ALL DEAD! I FEEL STRANGELY FRIGHTENED, YET ON THE OTHER HAND OBSESSED! I ALMOST WISH I'D NEVER FOUND THIS TOMB-- BUT I'M GOING TO SEE THIS THROUGH!
EXCUSE ME, SIR THOMPSON... IT WAS RADIOED AHEAD THAT HUMPHRIES AND HIS STUDENTS DIED UNDER MYSTERIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES! WOULD YOU CARE TO CLARIFY...
AND YOUR TRIP, IT IS RUMORED YOU MADE A FIND OF GREATEST IMPORTANCE...
PLEASE, GENTLEMEN-- NO COMMENT! NOT NOW, ANYWAY...
THAT SHOULD BE THE LAST OF IT... THANK YOU, LADS! BE CAREFUL NOW.
LUCKILY THE MUSEUM LET ME BRING EVERYTHING UP HERE TO SUSSEX... I NEED THE ISOLATION! THE TRANSLATIONS OF THE HIEROGLYPHICS WILL REQUIRE FULL CONCENTRATION AND INFINITE PATIENCE...
THE MORE I WORK WITH THESE SYMBOLS, THE MORE A PATTERN EMERGES. THEY SEEM TO TELL, WARN UPON ALL THE ARTIFACTS, OF A PHENOMENON LIKE WHAT WE CALL POSSESSION...
...BUT POSSESSION OF WHAT?? THERE SEEMS TO BE AN UNDEFINED THIRD STEP-- HAVEN'T A RUDDY CLUE WHAT IT RELATES TO... EXCEPT IT DOES HINT AT RESURRECTING ANUBIS.

"SHORTLY THEREAFTER, THE SHIP ARRIVED AT ITS DESTINATION BEARING TWO GRIM ADDITIONS TO ITS MYSTERIOUS CARGO...!
FIRST HUMPHRIES, THEN THE TWO STUDENTS... ALL DEAD! I FEEL STRANGELY FRIGHTENED, YET ON THE OTHER HAND OBSESSED! I ALMOST WISH I'D NEVER FOUND THIS TOMB-- BUT I'M GOING TO SEE THIS THROUGH!
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...BUT POSSESSION OF WHAT?? THERE SEEMS TO BE AN UNDEFINED THIRD STEP-- HAVEN'T A RUDDY CLUE WHAT IT RELATES TO... EXCEPT IT DOES HINT AT RESURRECTING ANUBIS.

BLAST!
WHY CAN'T I FIT THE PIECES OF THIS PUZZLE TOGETHER?!
TIRED-- CAN'T KEEP MY EYES FOCUSING. MAYBE... DRIVING MYSELF... PRESSING...
...TOO...
...HARRRR...
...FOR IT PROVIDED LITTLE REST AND LESS PEACE!
"SHADOWS LEERED FROM THE CORRIDORS OF NIGHTMARES, IMAGES NOT QUITE MEMORIES, HAUNTING...
MY GOD! WHAT HAPPENED HERE... THE ROOM IS A MESS! ALL MY ARTIFACTS ARE STREWN ABOUT AS IF THEY WERE WORTHLESS JUNK!
BLOOD!!! MY LORD, IT'S ALL OVER ME... AM I GOING MAD?
NO! NOT MAD-- NOTHING SO MERCIFUL AS THAT! I SEE IT ALL NOW... THE PIECES OF MY HIEROGLYPHIC PUZZLE FALL INTO PLACE!
I AM A MAN OF SCIENCE... I MUST EXAMINE THE EVIDENCE CAREFULLY! BUT I'M SCARED SCARED TO BLOODY HELL!

"WITH CONCEPT IN MIND, THE HIEROGLYPHICS SEEMED TO TAKE ON A WHOLE NEW MEANING...THEY SEEMED ALMOST, TERRIFYINGLY, TO TRANSLATE THEMSELVES...!
"AND THEN, REALIZATION...
HUMPHRIES...THE OTHERS--I KILLED THEM! I WAS SO BLIND TO IT ALL! I AM POSSESSED BY THE SPIRIT OF ANUBIS!
THIS SCRATCH...THAT'S HOW THE POSSESSION WAS ACHIEVED! AND MORE DEATHS WILL FOLLOW... BUT, NO!
IT MUST STOP HERE!
"I KNEW NOT WHAT THE SUBSTANCES WERE, OTHER THAN INSTINCTUALLY SENSING THEIR COMBINED TOXINS WOULD MORE THAN ACHIEVE THE DESIRED RESULTS...
"KILL THE BODY, KILL THE BEAST...!
"FOOL! POOR, BRAVE, STUPID FOOL...
"YET, ULTIMATELY WHAT ELSE WAS TO BE DONE? SUCH IS THE FATE OF THE HELPLESS, THE INNOCENTS CAUGHT UP IN SCHEMES THEY CAN KNOW NOTHING ABOUT.
"THE POISON WAS SWIFT. I WAS PLEASED I HAD TAKEN A SOUL, BUT THE BODY - THE FLESH MUST BE SURRENDERED...!
"THUS I WAS RESURRECTED--I, THE SPIRIT OF THE MOON, GUARDIAN OF THE WAY, WATCHER OF THE DEAD.
"I, ANUBIS, THE LIVING MAN-GOD, WALKED THE EARTH!"

PREVIEW REVIEW

This small box is an excellent catch-all piece of PREVIEW geography to take a few lines on and thank the many of you who sent letters in on our Satana issue (98% favorable) and in no uncertain terms told the Powers That Be, you want to see more of our satanic sibling. An unprecedented amount of mail came reminding us that Satana in particular and the horror magazine format in general is by no means part of a forgotten past. But it wasn't only Satana you raved about, for the Bill Mantlo/Keith Giffin collaboration of the second chapter of *Sword in the Star* brought forth no less thunderous applause and requests for its continuation.

We're still beaming with pride over that much-heralded issue and your affirmative responses to it multiplies that glow a thousandfold. We're pleased and we thank all of you for letting us know you are. And now let's see why.

Dear Marvel

MARVEL PREVIEW #7 featuring Satana the Devil's Daughter has inspired me into writing my first letter to any comics or other magazine. I have been reading Marvel publications for more than eight years and have finally decided to answer your continuous pleas for letters.

Bob Larkin's cover painting was excellent, though I objected to the manner in which the skin of the man kneeling before Satana was melting. It reminded me of wax and just turned me off.

The Satana story itself was nicely plotted and moved along at a rapid pace (perhaps too rapidly since we didn't learn much about the Camarilla quartet as separate entities). The Camarilla's imprisonment of Satana's true personality within her unconscious mind was a stroke of genius on the part of writer Chris Claremont, as was his revelation of the Basilisk's role in Satana's life. Not to mention that of the universe. Vicente Alcazar's artwork (too little seen of late in this medium) was mind staggering, though I tend to find Vicente's work alters in style and quality from one panel to the next and detracts from the overall continuity of the story. If you do bring Satana back, please make several alterations in her costume because right now, it comes across as an ordinary super heroine's outfit.

Although it didn't quite fit in with the horror format of this issue, Bill Mantlo's *Sword in the Star* epic was a most impressive piece of work. I do feel the series needs some supporting characters aside from Alkinoos, the robot and Rocky Raccoon would fit right in, but please get rid of his cigar. I would enjoy seeing more of Kirke and her animal friends and to follow Prince Wayfinder on his galactic quest. Please attempt to find someplace to showcase the rest of the chapters of his odyssey.

I agree with John Warner that Marvel ought to have a horror magazine in its line up, and I further believe Satana to be the perfect choice to star in such a proposed title. And as a back up either Lilith, the daughter of Dracula, or Tigra the Werewoman would be tops on my list. The few appearances I've seen of each of them has convinced me they're entitled to more than a one-dimensional treatment. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely
Tom Tattershall
7313 Raytown Rd., Raytown, M.O. 64133

We agree that Vicente Alcazar's considerable talents have been absent too long (though we were able to corral him into doing one chapter in our continuing adaptations of the five Apes movies in our power packed PLANET OF THE APES magazine recently, so check it out!) and we're (even now) working to rectify that situation. It seems the elusive Mr. Alcazar himself contacted us the other day and expressed an interest in working on a project for Marvel. We can't give anything away yet, so you'll just have to keep watching all our various black and white mags for updates. And we'd hardly consider that a torturous pastime by any standards.

We'd have to disagree with your statement, Tom, that Vicente's artwork varies in quality and style from panel to panel. The way we see it, Vicente's work reflects an overall mastery of this difficult medium and thus he uses a variety of graphic *techniques* which makes it rather difficult to pin down exactly what style he's rendering. You may prefer the look of one page to another, but that would probably be more of a personal preference than an objective aesthetic judgement.

Dear Masters of Shock

An end to Satana? Never! I simply couldn't pass up the opportunity to write my first letter to Marvel on the seemingly touchy subject of Satana. Not only is the Devil's Daughter a character with great potential, but she is that all too rare occurrence in comics literature a *female* character: non stereotyped with a distinctive personality and good possibilities for expansion. I'm sure my fellow female readers will agree.

Before you resign Satana to the list of guest stars in various mags, may I suggest a few alternatives? First, you might consider giving Satana a yearly "special" issue of SON OF SATAN minus Damon Hellstrom and featuring his succubus sister in a solo story. Two: Has Marvel ever considered publishing paperback adventures of its more popular characters in the novel format, without pictures? This sounds kind of outrageous, but the current occult craze shows no signs of diminishing, and buying a paperback is still more acceptable for a sixteen year old than buying a comic book. Don't ask me why, I don't know.

The reason I'm fighting so hard for Satana is because I've studied the occult with part or all emphasis on Satanism, for about three years, and at times, I've actually been mistaken for a practitioner of that religion. I am not, nor do I want to be, but I've found a depth of understanding in SON OF SATAN, GHOST RIDER, DRACULA, and of course, Satana, that smacks of St. Thomas Aquinas, Anton La Vey, Catherine Le Vorson, and Aleister Crowley. Impressive ranks for a "mere" comic book.

And perhaps the most fascinating aspect to Satana is her almost effortless universality in theological terms. We're all Satana in a directed form. We all want control over our own destinies, and however unconsciously, we all want to be God for a little while, as is Satana when she steals a man's soul. This reaches to the very depths of modern Satanism - the unconscious desire of deification brought to the surface and made into a conscious aim.

For providing us with such a faithful treatment of your chosen subject area, Mr. Lee, Mr. Claremont, and Mr. Alcazar, I salute three. All Hail.

Melisa Walker
Rt. 3
Elkton, Kentucky 42220

We're pleased as can be that our sweet succubus could elicit such an outpouring of praise from the feminine gender of our readership as well as the male portion. Your comments on Satana's deeper meaning are thought provoking and we're flattered to be placed in such illustrious occult company.

Thanks for your suggestions on future possibilities of format that we could best utilize Satana in. Frankly, as she is a character who's native to the Marvel black and-whites, we'd like to keep her in this medium for future appearances. This is really the place where we can exploit her full potential without watering down the concepts or visuals. The paperback novel idea is intriguing and you might be interested to know that Marvel had indeed allowed both The AVENGERS and CAPTAIN AMERICA to star in full length novels several years in the past. Of course, before we went ahead with such a project for Satana, it would be necessary to ascertain what the potential audience would be in terms of numbers; still it's not out of the realm of possibility.

Dear John, Chris, and Vicente,

I like Satana. I have liked her ever since the original Romita-drawn story featuring her appeared. But her checkered publishing history typified the frustrating problems with Marvel's black and white horror line, the horror comics in general, and even what's wrong with PREVIEW itself.

The original Marvel b&w's were examples of fine

(Continued on page 64)

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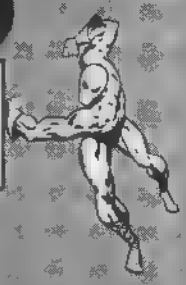

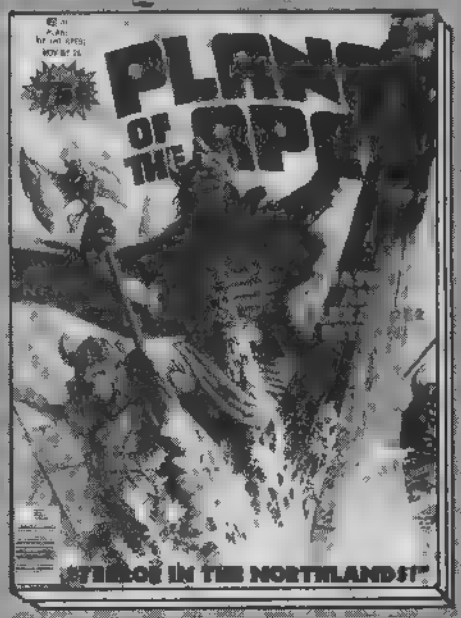

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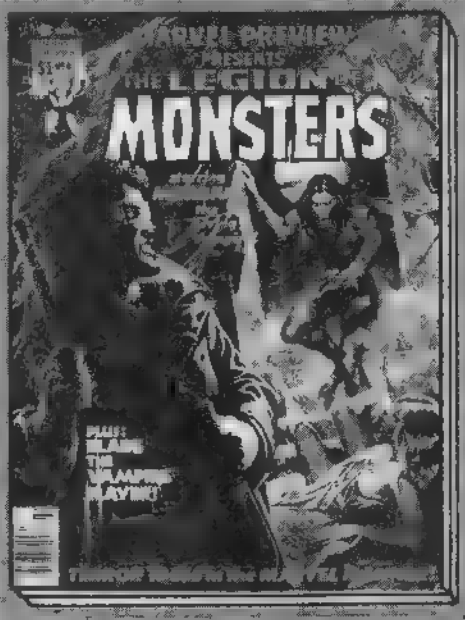

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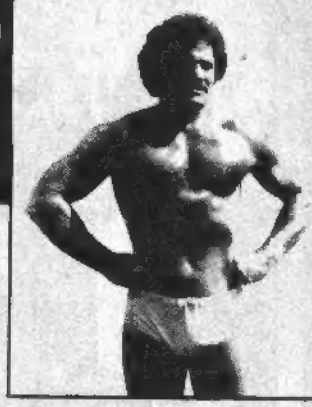

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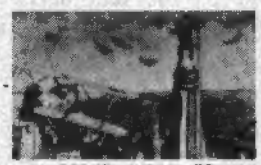
440 John Wayne
$1.50 (24"x29")

524 Ginger Kitten $2.00
(20"x30")


698 King Kong #2
$1.50 (30"x40")

464 King Kong #1
$1.50 (30"x40")

782 Unnameable*
$2.00 (24"x29")

394 Elvis Presley*
$2.50 (24"x29")

343 I Want You*
$2.50 (24"x29")

605 Cat In The Hat $3.00
(20"x30")

803 Dogs*
$3.00 (40"x30")

126 W. C. Fields
$1.50 (24"x29")

526 Frankenstein
$1.50 (24"x29")

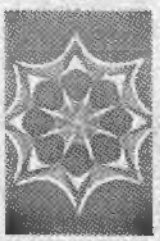
220 Frankenstein Movie, 1931
$2.00 (20"x30")

192 Dracula Movie, 1931 $2.00
(20"x30")

275 Puppies*
$3.00 (40"x30")

550 Creature from the Black Lagoon
$2.00 (20"x30")

866 Beast From 20,000 Fathoms
$1.50 (30"x40")


876 Time Warp**
$3.00 (24"x29")

112 Charlie Chaplin
$1.50 (24"x29")

457 Three Stooges
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138 Laurel and Hardy
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146 Marx Brothers
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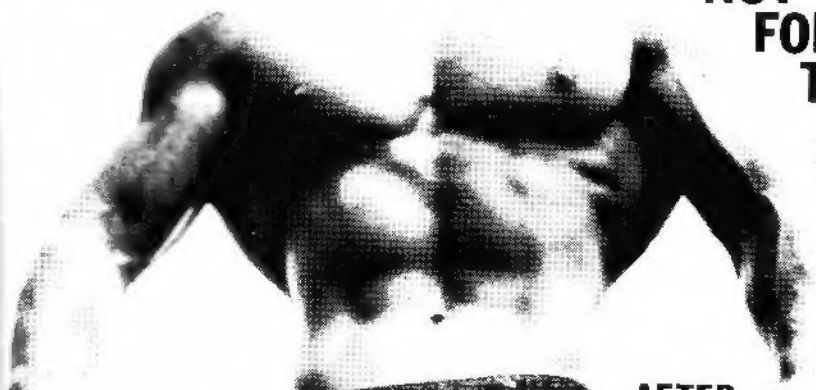
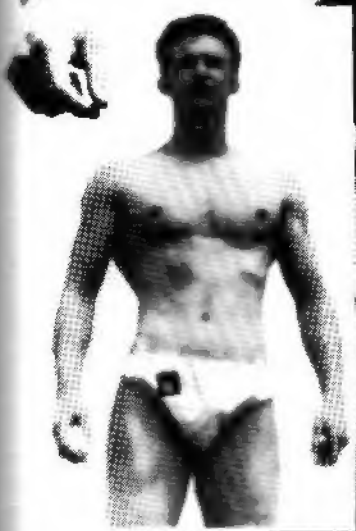


AFTER



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Add 2 or 3 inches to your arms, 4 or 5 inches to your chest — your rewards will be in direct proportion to your effort and accomplishments — nobody sets a limit to your success.

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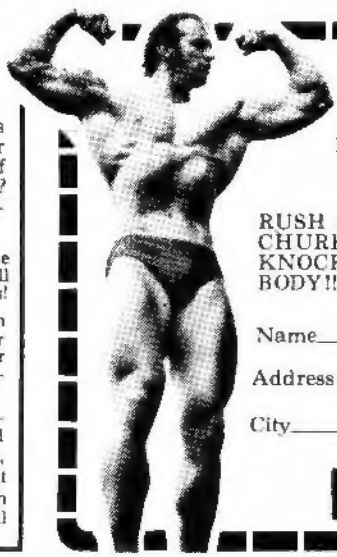
- ☐ **SHOULDERS** — Get rid of those puny shoulders! Instead, fill your shirts with bulging muscles!
- ☐ **LEGS** — Put some muscle on those spindly legs! Muscular legs will give you extra power like you've never dreamed possible!
- ☐ **ABDOMEN** — Trim and hard — that's the way your abs should look. Get rid of your pot-belly, improve your digestion, and get that washboard waist—all when you develop those abdominal muscles!



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